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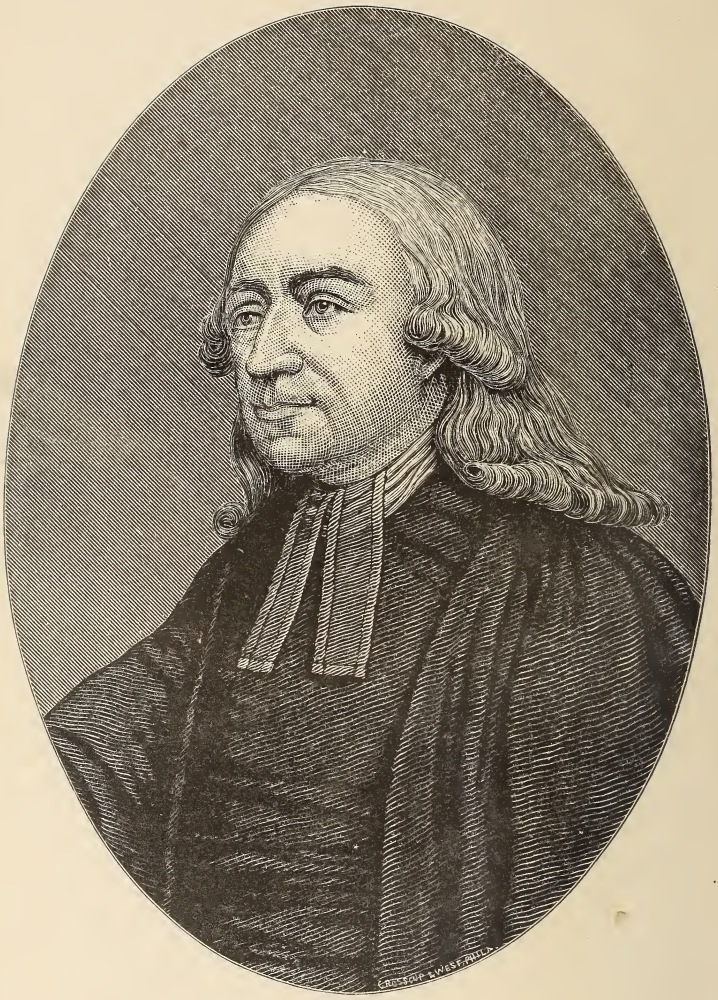

John Wesley

METHODISM:

OLD AND NEW.

WITH

SKETCHES OF SOME OF ITS EARLY PREACHERS.

BY

J. R. FLANIGEN.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

"How thou did'st raise this people, lift their horn,
And let them be no more the heathen's scorn."

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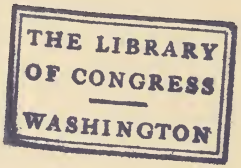

PREFACE.

Of course one must be "in the fashion" however thinly clad, and hence the author feels that a few words of introduction to the following pages will be appropriate, although, perhaps, not strictly necessary, but they shall be brief.

The chapters that are now placed within covers were begun at a period of leisure, and intended merely for publication as newspaper articles, and the early numbers of the series having met with such favorable reception at the hands of the public as was scarcely expected, they were continued to their present proportions, and have since been subjected to revision and some further enlargement. While the writer has not aspired to the dignity of an elaborate historian, he flatters himself that he has produced such an interesting and running synopsis of the history of Methodism as will prove entertaining as well as instructive to readers of all denominations, and he doubts not that the sketches of some of the old-time preachers whom he was fortunate enough to know, will serve as grateful memories to the old and pleasurable reading for the young.

The circumstances and dates given in the work may be relied on as accurate, while such expression of opin-

ion as has been presented is of course subject to the criticism of the reader.

Methodism is beyond all question a wonderful organization, and it may not be doubted that society is greatly indebted to it and its pioneers in America, as well as in other lands, not only for its humanizing influences, but for the matchless power it has developed in bringing mankind to a better understanding and appreciation of his relations, duties, and responsibilities to the Supreme Architect of the Universe; and deeply impressed by this great fact, the author of these pages has felt that even so modest a contribution to its literature as is herewith presented will be acceptable to its votaries.

J. R. F.

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METHODISM,

OLD AND NEW.

CHAPTER I.

Origin of Methodism in England.

THE marked growth of the Christian denomination which owes its existence to Wesley, not only in our own but in other countries, renders a consideration of its movements or its status, either generally or locally, at all times a subject of much interest to very many persons. And it has hence been thought that a series of articles relating to its existence in the olden time, and its progress during the several decades that have since passed, would be acceptable to a large number of readers.

It may be safely said that the period of our history covered by the years that have elapsed since the breaking out of the recent rebellion have constituted not only "a fast age," but one of remarkable forgetfulness. It is not at all surprising that such is the fact, for the strain upon the public mind during the period covered by the war, supplemented and continued, as has been the case, by reason of the industrial and financial

revolution that followed, has not only proved a most powerful absorbent of mind and memory, but a source of great demoralization, and it will require years of less "disjointed thinking" and reading to restore the necessary healthful equilibrium by which our people will be enabled to retrospect with facility and profit such portions of their country's history as are essential to creditable intercourse in society.

We are a somewhat singular people, differing widely in many material ways and methods from any others on the face of the globe. Our propensity for overdoing things, for instance, is without a parallel in the history of other nations. This propensity leads to an underdoing, or a neglect of things that are vital to our interest, morally, politically, and commercially; and it is greatly to be deplored that there has not been discovered some better means of calling a "halt" than the too often inevitable one that is best distinguished by the term "crash." The rapid progress made in our country during the half-century which closed with our centennial year has been of such startling character as to wellnigh daze the ordinary mind, and it is therefore not at all wonderful if the conditions that existed, or events that transpired, only two or three decades back of the present, are like so much Greek and Hebrew to an immensely large number of our people. To what extent this marvellous progress has been beneficial to the Church, and whether it has served to promote the original design of what is here best expressed as Wesleyism, or to obstruct it, is a question upon which

opinions will differ; but the man or woman who knows anything about the origin of Methodism, and who goes into a Methodist church of the present day, especially such as are found in the large and populous cities of the country, gets but a poor idea of the primitive sort of meeting-house in which the fathers of the sect were wont to minister or worship; and, glancing at the fashionable array and costly attire of "the congregation," one will seek in vain for the plainness recommended as an essential ingredient of the "new generation" by the founder of this now extensive denomination of Christians.

THE HISTORY OF THE ORIGIN OF METHODISM,

although sparse enough, is a plain and simple one, and the name under which the Banner of the Cross has been carried to remotest quarters of the earth was given to it in derision, designed, indeed, to be one of reproach. It was in the year 1729 that a few students in the Oxford (England) University, lamenting the low-down condition to which the Church had fallen, and the want of vital Christianity that was everywhere apparent, even among the clergy, commenced the reading and study of the Sacred Scriptures in the original tongue.

Bishop Simpson, in his recently-published "Cyclopedia," referring to the state of religion in Great Britain at the period mentioned, says it was "deplorable," and adds: "From the period of the restoration, infidelity was widely diffused, and it had deeply affected the educated classes of society. Public morals suffered from

the abandonment of religious principles, and from the example of those high in authority. While there were some of the clergy of the Church of England illustrious for intellectual power and personal piety, many were quite ignorant, and even loose in their morals. Writers like Swift and Sterne indulged in licentious humor, to the discredit of the pulpit which they occupied, while other clergymen spent their time in hunting, gambling, and intemperance. Doctrinal views were as unsettled as conduct. Arianism and Socinianism were advocated by such writers as Clarke, Priestley, and Whiston, and evangelical piety was regarded as fanaticism. Bishop Burnett deploringly says 'the outward state of things is bad enough, God knows, but that which heightens my fears rises chiefly from the inward state into which we are unhappily fallen.' 'Of the clergy,' he adds, 'the much greater part of those who come to be ordained are ignorant to a great degree not to be apprehended by those who are not obliged to know it.' . . . Dr. Watts, the eminent poet, states that, 'both among dissenters and churchmen, there was a general decay of religion in the hearts and lives of men.' Archbishop Decker says 'such are the dissoluteness and contempt of principle in the higher part of the world, and the profligacy, intemperance, and fearlessness of committing crime in the lower, as must, if this torrent of impiety stop not, become absolutely fatal.'"*

* Hon. Benjamin Harris Brewster, in an elaborate and finished address delivered before the literary societies of Dickinson Col-

Other authors show the same deplorable condition of the churches and the masses of the people, and it was

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lege at the ninety-sixth commencement of that institution, referring to the period immediately preceding the inception of Methodism, and the then existing and dangerous condition of society in England, says, "Turn then to the history of England, at, and about the time of its (Methodism's) establishment, and we will immediately see how potential it was for the political, social, and temporal security of that kingdom. When John Wesley felt the divine impulse within him, when, chosen and sanctified by God's grace, he went forth to save men, there was a season of lassitude and indifference. The very devil of sensual impiety and heartless irreligion pervaded all walks of life. Christianity was not believed in. It was treated as if it were untrue, but permitted because it was necessary for society to have some form of religious belief. . . . The chief ministers of the Church, often stained with sin and puffed up with pride, delivered over to underlings the people they were deputed to guide and save. The rich were growing richer, the poor poorer. The vulgar vices of those in authority were readily taken up and imitated by the untaught and unprotected population. Infidelity was active, aggressive, and generally diffused; rebellious discontent was fermenting in the souls of men who saw no happiness in this life, and who believed they were doomed to a fate of perpetual labor, living on the edge of starvation. Society was sick, sick to its heart of hearts, and a fearful storm was gathering. That sentiment of Nihilism which Peter Lombard, the 'master of the sentences,' is reported to have taught in the twelfth century, and Abelard is accused of having been the author of, and which now infests the Russian Empire, and was the ruling principle of communistic action, was crawling over the public mind of the common people of Great Britain. . . .

"The bloodshed and blasphemy of the French Revolution would have been repeated in England, had it not been for the interposition of this religious zeal, excited and organized by John Wesley.

in presence of this wretched state of affairs, that the students already mentioned set about the work of vitalizing, or, to use a modern term, reconstructing themselves, with a view, doubtless, to sow broadcast the seed from which might result the fruit they expected to reap through an honest and sincere study of the Word of God in all its entirety. These young men formed themselves into a society, the membership of which was at first confined to an extremely small number. Their object was not simply to read and study the Scriptures, but to aid and support each other in efforts for religious improvement. They arranged their time and systematized their conduct, and fixed for themselves and observed certain times and periods for fasting and prayer, and, as they progressed and received inspiration from on High, they went outside of the University among the people, carrying with them the faith with which they had been inspired, and exhorting the people to repentance and reformation; and here may be said to have originated what we may quite properly characterize as the colossal structure now known as Methodism. The fellow-students of these young pioneers in the work of

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The middle and lower classes were captivated with its influence, and thus diverted from righting their grievances with the sword or the flames of revolution. The very men who suffered most, and would have been the first to have revolted against the evils that enveloped them, were the first to repel all attempts to excite them to acts of resistance and popular tumult. . . . The men who shouted with Wesley and Whitefield at their chapels and in their field preaching, would have been raving with anarchy and burning with hatred for all religion."

Gospel truth, of course, ridiculed them, and applied to them various terms designed to be of reproach. They called them "Holy Bigots," "The Godly Club," "The Holy Club," and Methodists, a term which had been applied in derision very many years before to a sect of persons otherwise known as Anabaptists.

JOHN WESLEY,

who a great many persons in this country believe to have been an illiterate person, was a Fellow of Lincoln College. He was a man of superior attainments and an accomplished scholar. He had been ordained a priest, and had acted for some time as a curate. At the period stated he was about twenty-five years old, a sincere and devout Christian.

As the little society which originated in Oxford grew by degrees, and began to be felt outside of the University, Mr. Wesley was added to its number. Something older than the others, he developed administrative ability that attracted attention, and, as is usual in all such cases, he was very soon accepted as a leader of the little band, just as Washington and other heroes of our Revolutionary times who developed the needed capacity, whether of a civil or military character, were accepted by the people as leaders in either council or field of war; and directly there grew into being an active organization, with Mr. Wesley as its head and director. Among

THE PIONEERS OF METHODISM

in England were also Charles Wesley, an educated man,

and a college tutor; the celebrated preacher Whitefield, Doctor Coke, Morgan, Kirkham, Burridge, Hervey, and Ingham, and, by way of ridicule, Mr. Wesley was styled, by the opposition that would naturally exist to such a movement, the "Curator of the Holy Club." The little society grew apace, but differences arose as to points of doctrine, and some of those at first connected with it turned their steps in other directions. We do not find that there was, at the beginning of this movement, any intention on the part of those concerned in it to organize or establish a separate church or denomination, but it is ever thus of progressive movements which concern the interest of the masses of mankind. If the principle involved be of a vital character, it grows as it is elaborated, and its swelling proportions directly call for such substantial recognition as results in distinctive and permanent organization.

Within ten years after the date given above, the Wesleys visited this country, and after their return to England they began the public preaching of the Word. Whitefield, however, took the field in advance, and the churches being closed against him, he preached in the open air.

> "Letting down the gilded chains from high,
> He drew his audience upward to the sky."

"I thought," said he, "that it might be doing the service of my Creator, who had a mountain for His pulpit and the heavens for a sounding-board; and who, when His gospel was rejected by the Jews, sent His

servants into the highways and hedges." This declaration was probably made in justification of what the Wesleys were disposed at first to consider too much of an innovation, for Whitefield was really the advance courier of Methodism in the open field, the pioneer who went before all the rest, and felled the trees in the forests, and cut away the matted accumulations, the growth of many years of ignorance, neglect, and debauchery that had overspread the land; but the Wesleys followed shortly after him, and the elder of these two, feeling, probably, that he also must justify his departure from the "decorum" of the Church establishment, said, "I submitted to be more vile, and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation;" and thus was the bark of the new generation of Christians got ready for launching on the sea of public opinion in England. But it was as yet a shapeless affair. A single word signified the nature of the propelling force, and that was reform. There was then no dream of revolution. Nothing more was sought than a revival of religion; a calling back of the people to duty, and a realization of their responsibility to God. We shall see, however, as we progress,

"The matchless working of the Power
That shuts within the seed the future flower,
Bids these in elegance of form excel,
In color these, and these delight the smell:
Sends Nature forth, the daughter of the skies,
To dance on earth and charm all human eyes."

CHAPTER II.

Introduction of Methodism in America.

ALTHOUGH it is historically stated that "Methodism was introduced into New York and Maryland in 1766, and gradually spread along the coast," it may, nevertheless, be fairly claimed that Philadelphia is the birthplace of American Methodism; and, considering the predominance of the Quaker element in that city in the olden time, the fact is one of just pride to its very many citizens who are connected with that denomination of Christians. It was there that the first "Annual Conference" was held, and there stands to-day the oldest Methodist church edifice in America. It was there, also, that the first "General Conference" was held, and, for many years, the "Quaker City" was the fountain from which flowed the streamlets which in after-times grew to be swollen rivers of Gospel truth and vital Christianity.

Bishop Simpson, in his "Cyclopædia of Methodism," says: "As early as 1767, Captain Webb held the first Methodist service in Philadelphia. Dr. Wrangle, a Swedish missionary, who had preached in Philadelphia, and who was acquainted with Mr. Wesley's writings, on leaving that city had recommended his members to hear any of Mr. Wesley's preachers who

might visit that city. Hence the way was prepared for Captain Webb's reception." The author adds: "In 1768 he organized a class of seven members, . . . and during 1769 additions were made to the society." This "society," which constituted, as we think, the first organization of Methodism in America, met for some time in a sail-loft on the edge of what was then Dock Creek, near where is now the line of Front Street. During this year, as is learned from the authority quoted, Messrs. Boardman and Pilmoor arrived in Philadelphia as missionaries, sent out by Mr. Wesley, the former, after having preached there for a while, going to New York. Mr. Pilmoor, who remained in that city, wrote to Mr. Wesley that he found there about "an hundred members."

Bishop Simpson, in his article on New York City, says: "The first Methodist society in New York was founded in 1776,"—eight years later, as will be seen, than the date given for the sail-loft organization or society in Philadelphia, and seven years after Mr. Pilmoor had written to England that he found there "an hundred members." It is true that there had been some preaching in New York previous to the time fixed as the period for the foundation of the first society in that city, and there was certainly exhortation by Embury, and some preaching by Captain Webb as early as 1768; but the question of priority in this connection is not, perhaps, of sufficient importance to warrant a discussion of it at greater length.

THE SOLDIER PREACHER.

The mention of Captain Webb as a Methodist preacher will doubtless sound strangely to modern ears, but his appearance in the pulpit, improvised in those days with a few boards to protect the speaker's feet from moisture, and the clouds for a drapery, was but a repetition of history. Methodism originally was revolution, the condition from which orators, statesmen, preachers, and generals grow out spontaneously. It was coeval with the political revolution out of which grew the nation which to-day challenges the admiration of the world, and it may not be doubted that its wonderful success, not only here, but in other lands, has been largely influenced by the baptism of Liberty which it received during the years of its early life on this side of the Atlantic.

Captain Webb was an English army officer, and had charge of the barracks at Albany. He was a man of good social position, and of unstinted means, so that he was useful in more ways than through preaching. He is spoken of as a zealous and, for those times, a most effective preacher; albeit, even then, some of the people objected to his style. He was, however, the sort of man that was required for the work. Going forward, like a pioneer, through the wilderness, he roused the people from their stupor, and prepared the way for those who were to follow him.

The very early history of Methodism in our country

seems involved in a good deal of obscurity, at least, until the period when there was an unquestioned "General Conference" meeting. For some years after the earliest date mentioned, and indeed, until after the war of the Revolution, the fortunes or progress of the new movement were of a varied and shifting nature. It is ever thus, however, with such an enterprise. In this case the advocates and adherents of the new movement were too noisy for the staid Quakers, who formed a considerable element in Philadelphia, and they were not sufficiently "respectable" or high-toned for the other very considerable and most wealthy class connected with the Established Church. But revolutions, be they moral or political, stop not to consider such questions.

Preaching was conducted at several places in Philadelphia during the earliest stages of the work, frequently in the open air; a policy which was adopted, doubtless, for two reasons: first, the want of a building, and, second, the better opportunity there was to gather an outside audience of greater numbers. The field which is now known as Franklin Square was used in those days for a race-course, and Pilmoor and others frequently held forth there to large numbers of the people, using the judges' stand for a rostrum. The old "Potter's Field," now Washington Square, wherein are deposited the bones of many thousand victims of the plague by which our brethren in the South have been so sorely stricken during the past two summers, was also used as a preaching station, notably by John King, to whom

Mr. Pilmoor objected at first, because he had not sufficient confidence in his fitness for the work. King persevered, however, in what he considered his mission, and it was not long before Mr. Pilmoor was glad to embrace him as a co-laborer in the vineyard of the Lord.*

Mr. Pilmoor, like Mr. Wesley, came out from the Established Church, and it would seem as though a good deal of effort was needed to enable these gentlemen to overcome what we may, without offence, term their

* Mr. King was subsequently assigned to Delaware, and thence went into Maryland, and is said to have been the first man to preach Methodism in Baltimore. His first sermon in that city was delivered at Front and French Streets, and his "pulpit" was the anvil-block taken out of a blacksmith-shop. It is stated that a Mr. Baker, surveyor of the county, was awakened and converted under that sermon. The second preaching of King was at the corner of Baltimore and Calvert Streets, where he had a table for a preaching-stand. It was "training day," and the militia were "on parade," and some of them being under the influence of liquor, and finding no enemy to attack, assailed the preacher, and upset his pulpit, and he was protected from further molestation by the captain. King was not only a shouting preacher, but rather an uproarious one, and made so much noise that the report of it reached Mr. Wesley, who was impelled to write to him from England, begging that he would reform his methods. He wrote, "Scream no more at the peril of your soul. God now warns you by me, who he has set over you. Speak as earnestly as you can, but do not *scream*. Speak with all your heart, but with a moderate voice. It was said of our Lord 'he shall not cry;' the word properly means he shall not *scream*. Herein be a follower of me as I am of Christ." Mr. King, who was an Englishman, finally located in Raleigh, North Carolina, where he died.

prejudice against "lay preachers." The same thing occurred with Wesley in England. On a certain occasion, while he was away from London visiting different localities, Thomas Maxfield began preaching. He was not among those authorized by Mr. Wesley. He was, in fact, a volunteer; and on hearing of his being thus engaged, Mr. Wesley hastened his return to London, and was about to prohibit further preaching by Maxfield; but his mother, in whose judgment he had great confidence, had heard him preach, and she remonstrated with the son, saying: "Be careful what you do with respect to that young man, for he is as surely called of God to preach as you are," and, she added, "examine what have been the fruits of his preaching, and hear him for yourself." Mr. Wesley followed the advice of his mother, and, being convinced, gave his approval. This was the first time, we think, that he had agreed to the employment of lay preachers in the work; and thus was another link in the ecclesiastical chain that still held him to the Established Church broken, but we believe it is understood that, notwithstanding the prominence of his position in the establishment of Methodism, he never severed his connection with the Church of England.

DISCOURAGEMENTS.

At times, and especially during the war of the Revolution, and afterward when the city was visited by yellow fever, the progress of Methodism in Philadelphia was greatly retarded,—so much so, indeed, as that at one

time the name of that city failed to appear on the records of the Conference, the work that was done being credited in the name of Pennsylvania; but there was such a vitality about what we may properly term the "reformation," set on foot by Wesley and his co-workers in England, that it soon sprang forward again with a spirit and enthusiasm that is most wonderfully illustrated by the centennial status of Methodism, when 1,032,184 members were reported as in the communion, with 7576 itinerant and 8602 local preachers. The war itself must have proved, under any circumstances that were likely to exist, a great embarrassment to the progress of the work. The demoralization which is a natural result of war would necessarily be a cause of obstruction, but a more serious cause of trouble was that most of the preachers were from England, and they failed to become impregnated with the spirit of liberty by which the mass of the people were controlled. They seem to have been bound by a double tie: fidelity to the "home government" and a yet lingering affection for the Established English Church, and, as soon as it was made manifest that the colonies were determined to break away from the mother-country, they, with inconsiderable exceptions, made preparation for returning to England, which they did; and thus was the infant Church left for a time to drift in the maelstrom of confusion, with but few experienced hands or heads to guide it. Mr. Asbury, however, who was afterward invested with the robes of the bishopric, stood firmly at his post, guiding and directing with consummate

skill, and keeping the flock together as well as possible under the circumstances.*

The office of bishop was not established in the Methodist denomination for several years after the organization of Conferences. In 1773, Mr. Rankin reached Philadelphia, having been appointed by Mr. Wesley "general superintendent" of the work in America, and this was the title of an executive officer until the growth and better establishment of the Church gave to it such importance and needs as suggested an office and power of greater dignity. For a time Mr. Wesley was recognized as the head of the Church in America, as well as in England. The General Conference of 1784 passed a resolution declaring that, "during the life of Rev. Mr. Wesley, we do recognize ourselves as his sons in the Gospel, ready in matters belonging to the Church government to obey his commands;" but it was not long before the spirit of republicanism or democracy which was growing up

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* During the war, such of the preachers as had come from England, and who remained, were looked upon with much suspicion by the loyalists, especially in Delaware and Maryland; and they were closely watched, and it may have been that cause therefor had been given by some indiscreet utterances; and for a time Mr. Asbury found it prudent to conceal himself from public view, during which retirement he was the guest of his friend Mr. Thomas White, in the State of Delaware. Asbury, however, was in accord with the popular movement, and, obtaining an opportunity to make his sentiments in reference to the conflict known, he was ever afterwards received with respect and cordiality.

among the people revolted at a control which, however kindly in design, was found to be impracticable, and three years later, at a Conference held in obedience to his direction, the resolution conferring upon him the supreme executive power was rescinded. It can scarcely be necessary to say that this latter action involved no disrespect to the originator of the Church. The same sort of incongruity that grew up between the British government and the colonies, separated by an ocean, could not fail to follow an attempt to govern an American Church in England. Something approximating to success in such an enterprise might result in this age of steamships and cablegrams, when the ocean has been reduced to a ferry, with limits so circumscribed as that men speak with each other on either side; but in the early days of Methodism, when months were required to make a journey between the two countries, such a governing power on the other side of the Atlantic must have proved simply destructive to the work in hand. The term superintendent continued to be in use until the Conference of 1787, when that of bishop was substituted. The first three bishops of the American Church were Thomas Coke, Francis Asbury, and Richard Whatcoat, and they were all from the British Wesleyan Conference. Bishops Coke and Asbury were consecrated in 1784, and Bishop Whatcoat in 1800.

CHAPTER III.

Class-Meetings the Seed of the Church.

It was not until after the Revolution and the treaty of peace with the mother-country that American Methodism was enabled to shake off the elements of obstruction that seemed, up to that time, to cling about and hamper its progress. Filtered out from what must, in candor, be stated as the corruption of the English Church, it was not only stubbornly resisted by the adherents of that establishment, but was more or less embarrassed by a still-lingering affection on the part of many of the leaders for the traditional forms and memories among which they had been reared. It is very clear that Mr. Wesley had no idea of establishing a new church or religious denomination when he begun his work, and much less had he a conception of the magnitude of the structure that would be reared from the modest effort of his early days. He was, to a very great extent, the creature of circumstances, sincere, earnest, and zealous, in his own purpose, but constantly controlled by a superior power. He clung to the Established Church with a tenacity and a reverence for its traditions that were both natural and characteristic, and, as has already been seen, it was with great reluctance that he betook himself to the fields and sheds of the

mining districts after the doors of the churches had been closed against him and his followers, and it was probably needful that he should for a time be abused, maligned, hunted, as it were, and pelted with stones and other missiles as he was, to strengthen his purpose, and make more determined his resistance to the error and immorality which had not only crept into, but absolutely permeated, the Established Church of the realm. Many men would have yielded and succumbed to such persecution as was for a time visited upon him and his associates, but, guided and sustained by Almighty power, they faltered not.

But it is worth while to glance just here at the simplicity of the movement out of which such a magnificent structure as Methodism is to-day was evolved. The class-meeting, which is even yet the most vital and essential element of Methodism, was the result of accident. It grew out of the social relation, and was a sort of natural emanation. Singularly enough, what is to the general public the most obscure and apparently most inconsiderable stone in the structure of Methodism, was really its chief foundation block, upon which has been reared the towering and massive establishment whose arms reach out to all quarters of the globe, and whose voice is heard in proclamation wherever the ear of mankind can be reached. It is thought by many persons that "the classes" have lost much of their prestige, and we do not doubt that, considering relative numbers, their efficiency is much less than in the olden time. The truth is, that Methodism has progressed,

not alone in numbers, in influence, and in power, but also and alas! in the vanities with which the world is besotted, and it may not be questioned that many, very many, who are enrolled in its great army are but whited sepulchres, bearing only the shadow or the profession of the Cross, without being influenced by its spirit. The English Methodists cling to the class-meetings with much greater pertinacity than do the Americans. They are still considered there as a prime test of membership, and we incline to the opinion that this fact gives to Methodism in England a better meaning than in America. We can imagine, however, why the gambler who "bulls" and "bears" the stock market, assisting to wreck fortunes in an hour, that he may thereby put money in his pocket, and whose name is inscribed on the church-roll, avoids the class-room, and we can also understand how uncongenial must be the exercises and devotions of that little room to the lawyer who, in derogation of his professional duty and in practical violation of his oath of office, will take fees from both sides, or who, to gain his cause and win his fee,

"Quibbles truth to be error and wrong to be right."

Such people, who are "members" and who frequently contribute largely to the embellishment of the churches and for other purposes, neglect or avoid this essential element or practice of genuine Methodism, and hence the complaint that is frequently uttered, that while the churches seem to be in a most flourishing condition, "the love of God" abideth not in them as of yore.

We have said that the origin of the class-meeting was the result of accident, and that it grew out of the social relation. Perhaps we should qualify the statement as to the accident, but the origin was thus: on a certain occasion Mr. Wesley was asked to meet a few persons who felt that they needed advice, counsel, and, doubtless, encouragement, and he did so. The result was so satisfactory that they met again, and again, and yet again, the number of those present being increased from time to time by invitation. Out of this casual circumstance grew the weekly class-meetings. In 1742, the societies in England being largely increased, they were divided into classes consisting of twelve members each, with one of the number as "the leader." Mr. Wesley says: "In the latter end of the year 1739 eight or ten persons came to me in London and desired that I would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee the wrath to come. This," he adds, "was the rise of the United Society;" and Bishop Simpson says: "It was at Bristol, February 15, 1742, whilst discussing the subject of debt" (wonderful concomitant of life), "that one arose and proposed that every member of the society should pay one penny a week; another said that some were so poor they could not afford it, when the first replied: 'Put eleven of the poorest with me, and, if they can give nothing, I will give for them as well as for myself, and each of you call upon eleven weekly, receive what they can afford and make up the difference.' From this sprung forth this mighty organization."

Primitive enough, certainly; twelve men in a class

with a leader, out of which grew "stewards" to gather the fund and disburse it to the men who would go on circuit to preach; and as the plant develops—first the little shoot above the ground, then the bud, then the leaf, then the blossom, and finally the fruit, full grown and ripe—so did "this mighty organization," as the bishop terms it, evolve from an insignificance of beginning that is, in comparison, simply astounding.

It seems impossible to proceed with this subject without pausing for a moment to contemplate the wonderful growth that has resulted from such a beginning. "Prevision and exact calculation," says M. Guizot, in his lately published "History of France," "do not count for so much in the lives of governments and peoples. It is unexpected events, inevitable situations, the imperious necessities of successive epochs, which most often decide the conduct of the greatest powers and the most able politicians." Such is the fact. Historians, in the seclusion of their retirement, and in their learned way, are much given to look back on the development of events long past, and attribute them as results of well-digested and systematic plans concocted or arranged by the chief actors, the truth, all the while, being that they were produced by uncontrolled and, perhaps, irresistible circumstances. No one can read what there is of the early history of Methodism without coming to the conclusion stated by the distinguished author from whom we have quoted. Truly,

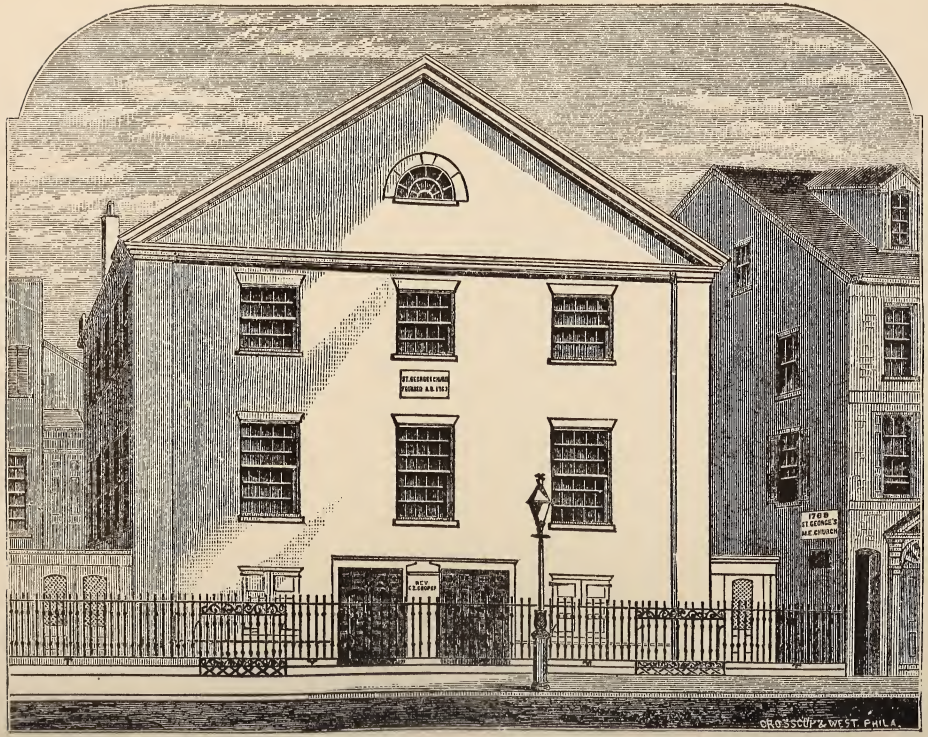
> "There's a Divinity that shapes our ends,
> Rough-hew them as we will."

And while we agree to Guizot's proposition, as applicable to the doings of men, we know, that He

> "Who reins the wind, gives the
> Vast ocean bounds,
> And circumscribes the floating
> Worlds their rounds."

could alone have piloted to such a fruition.

We remarked in a previous chapter that the oldest Methodist church edifice in America stands in the city of Philadelphia. It is St. George's, and is located on the east side of Fourth Street, between Race and Vine Streets, and we shall not err, we think, if we give to it the distinction of being the oldest Methodist church edifice in the world. The rude hand of progress, by which rivers are turned from their course and mountains pierced as with a needle, has spared to us this souvenir of the past. We know that it is revered by very many for its refreshing associations, but it should be cherished as a holy shrine, to which Methodists from all the world might go and worship; and the hand that would be raised to destroy it should be palsied. The old fort was built in 1763 by a German Reformed society, a congregation that had been worshipping in the neighborhood. They failed, however, to do more than to get up the walls and put a roof on the building. The lot on which the church stands is 55 by 85 feet, and was taken up by the Germans on ground-rent. When the building was roofed in, the society was much in debt, and some of the members were put in prison on account of their inability to pay, and subsequently



St. George's Church, Philadelphia.

the church was sold by order of the "Provincial Assembly." It was purchased by an individual, who afterwards, in November, 1769, sold it to a member of the Methodist society for £650, Pennsylvania currency. When purchased by the Methodists it had no floor, and for a considerable time only the eastern half was floored and furnished with benches of rough boards, according to the camp-meeting style. At a time during the war, in 1777, when the city was occupied by the British army, they took possession of the church, and used it for drilling their cavalry. After the peace, Bishop Asbury took hold of the matter, and labored most earnestly to have the building paid for and finished; but it was not until the year 1791 that the galleries were erected, and at that time there were enough Methodists in the city to fill the house, including the galleries; but it was yet an unfinished structure, and a few years later the good Bishop organized another movement to raise means for the completion and improvement of the house. In later years other improvements were made, the walls being raised so as to give a basement for class and school rooms.

St. George's may be truthfully styled the mother of churches. From her have sprung, either directly or remotely, all the Methodist churches in Philadelphia. For many years "St. George's charge" was the controlling power over the local Methodism. All the preachers for the city were assigned or appointed by the Conference to "St. George's charge," and thence were detailed to alternate in the several churches that had grown up

and which were in "the charge." A "plan" was arranged on the principle of the Counting House calendar. A would preach in the morning at St. George's, in the evening at Ebenezer, and on the following Sunday he would preach, say, at Salem in the morning, and at Nazareth in the evening, while B and C would on that day supply the pulpits which A had occupied on the previous Sabbath, so that the several congregations embraced in "the charge" had an opportunity to hear all the preachers that were stationed in the city alternately. The afternoon service in the churches was generally conducted by "local preachers," of whom there was a fair supply in the city. These were for the most part well-to-do mechanics or persons engaged in other occupations, some of whom we shall have occasion to notice in future chapters.

Glorious memories and associations are connected with old St. George's. Many thousands have been profited by the preaching and the prayers which ascended from within those walls; and other thousands, whose spirits now bask in realms "where seraphs gather immortality," date their new birth from under the roof-tree of the oldest Methodist church edifice in the country. It is the only church in the connection whose date runs back one hundred years, and was at the close of the centennial year of Methodism the scene of highly interesting centenary services.

CHAPTER IV.

The Old Churches.

It is a notable circumstance that while Methodism had its origin in England, the first "conference" of ministers there was not held until 1774, or a year later than that held in Philadelphia, in 1773. This may be accounted for by the fact that there was greater need for preachers to come together for the transaction of business in this country than existed in England, where Mr. Wesley was the supreme director of affairs. The spirit of Republicanism seemed to be an ingredient, or rather, perhaps, we should say an inspiration, of the Methodist birth. It is also likely that the more advanced ideas of the people generally here had an important influence to push the movement to an organized condition. The men engaged in the work on this side of the Atlantic, although, as seen in a previous chapter, for the most part clinging to the home government, were not influenced to the same extent by the traditions of the Old Church, as were those engaged in England; besides, the people who joined the Methodists here came largely from the Moravians, and those who had, to some extent, been recognized as Lutherans; and, in addition to all this, there was surrounding the preachers in

America a morale of progress which was not experienced on the other side of the water.

As the virgin soil of a new country is richer and greatly more productive when prepared for cultivation than that of an old one, so it has ever been found that the people, both men and women, who settle it, are more actively progressive, and we shall therefore find that in point of numbers, wealth and power, American Methodism has kept in advance of that of the mother-country. It is also a subject for gratulation that American Methodism has been much less a subject of division into sub-sects than it has in Great Britain; and here again we are brought to a realization of the superiority of those American institutions which give form, character, and faith to the various denominations that are fostered by their benign influence.

THE PIONEERS OF LOCAL METHODISM

in Philadelphia have long since been retired to their well-earned rest in the mansions of their God, but their descendants are yet with us, many of them occupying honored places not only in the Church, but in other relations of life; and it may hence be worth while to recall the names of a few of those who first braved the sneer and reproach of such persons as affected to despise the adherents of Wesley. The old Saint George's church, to which we referred somewhat briefly in our last chapter, after being sold by order of the Provincial Assembly, and purchased by young Hockley (probably Heockley), was conveyed to Miles Pennington, a tallow

chandler, who was a member of the infant society; and Mr. Asbury, when referring to the church for some years after its purchase and possession, mentioned it as "our preaching-house;" so it would seem the name Saint George's, by which it is now known, was not given to it until about the year 1781, after which time he so termed it in his writings.

Doctor Lednum, referring to the first improvement of the building by which it was made ready as a place of worship, said: "It was floored from end to end, and more comely seats were put in it, with a new pulpit like a tall tub on a post, which was the fashion of the times, but one of the worst fashions that ever was for a pulpit." Watson, in his "Annals," says it was "A dreary, cold-looking place in winter time, when, from the leaky stove-pipe, mended with clay, the smoke would frequently issue and fill all the house;" and describing the pulpit he says: "About twenty feet from the east end there stood a square thing not unlike a watch-box with the top sawed off,"—rather an obscure description after all, perhaps, to thousands of our readers, who have not the slightest knowledge concerning what was the watch-box of half a century ago that was found fastened down on the pavement at many of the street corners.

Here we may pause for a moment to notice the temper of Mr. Watson's reference to Methodism in his "Annals," every line of which, nearly, betokens the prejudiced mind. It is only about twenty years since Mr. Watson's book passed through the press, albeit the ill-natured remarks indulged in concerning a denomi-

nation of people now so extensive, and indeed potential, were probably written many years previously; but all that he has to say of Methodism is in the worst possible taste, and it is to be hoped that, if the work is ever republished, the editor, whoever he may be, will have the discretion to eliminate the offensive passages. Dr. Lednum, referring to the contempt for the early Methodists as evinced by some persons in the olden time, narrates the case of an individual who always made it a point, as he said, to cross to the other side of Fourth Street when about to pass Saint George's. Now, the same individual, if living, and maintaining the same prejudice, would probably walk on the railway track, in the centre of the street, and thus keep as far away as possible from the two extremes of Methodism on the one side and Roman Catholicism on the other.

But to return: Mr. Pennington conveyed the old church to Richard Boardman, Joseph Pillmore, Thomas Webb, Edward Evans, Daniel Montgomery, John Dowers, Edmund Beach, Robert Fitzgerald, and James Emerson. The sail-loft property at Dock Creek, in which the society had previously worshipped, belonged to a Mr. Croft, who was also a prominent Methodist. In 1789 the trustees of the church were James Kenear, Thomas Arnnatt, Jacob Baker, and John Hood, "the sweet singer" as he was termed, and who for many years stood in front of the ugly pulpit, and, "raising the hymns," led the congregation in singing. James Doughty, Josiah Luseby, Duncan Stewart, and Burton Wallace were also trustees at the same time. Lambert

Wilmer, who was a militia officer during the Revolutionary war, was also a prominent Methodist.

Robert Fitzgerald, already mentioned as one of the trustees of Saint George's, was one of the most earnest and active men in the connection. He was a block and pump maker, and lived in the neighborhood of Penn and Shippen, now Bainbridge Street, very probably on the same spot where an extensive sugar-refinery now stands. His shop was a sort of headquarters for the down-town or Southwark Methodists, and was frequently visited by the preachers, his dwelling being at all times open for their entertainment on either long or short stays.

As early as the year 1774 what was then, as now, known as the "New Market," at Second and Pine Streets, was used for preaching purposes by the Methodists, the stalls serving as seats for such of the people as preferred them to standing, and as early as that a class was held weekly at Mr. Fitzgerald's house.

About the year 1789 Mr. Petheridge, whose son was afterward a member of the New Jersey Conference, purchased a lot on the east side of Second Street, below Catharine, on which to have built a church for the down-town Methodists, of whom by this time there were very many, and the construction of a brick building was at once begun. The lot was forty-two feet front by ninety-six feet in depth, and a very substantial edifice was erected and completed during the year 1790. The building was about thirty feet front by about sixty in depth, having an alley-way on each side of it, by

which entrance was had to another building in the rear, which was subsequently constructed for school purposes. This church was for many years known as

OLD EBENEZER,

the prefix "old" having been given to it after the congregation had grown to such proportions as to require a larger building and of more modern construction. This old landmark of early Methodism stood some fifteen or twenty feet back from the present house line of Second Street, and was permitted to remain until about the year 1850, when it was sold to Mr. David H. Bowen, who at once proceeded to demolish the greater part of it and erect more modern improvements. Three stores and dwellings now occupy the ground on which Old Ebenezer stood for so many years, but a part of the south wall still remains, having been utilized by Mr. Bowen in the construction of one of the new houses. The church had a gallery on three sides, and was constantly used for public worship until the year 1818, when the "New Ebenezer," on Christian Street, west of Third, was completed.

The old building that has been swept away by the uncompromising hand of progress was the second Methodist church in Philadelphia, as it was the first church edifice built in that city by the Methodists, although not constructed until twenty years after the purchase of St. George's. We remember it very well. It was an extremely modest and unpretending structure, with a peaked front and highly-pitched roof. For

many years after its abandonment for preaching purposes it was used for the Sunday-schools connected with the society, and class meetings. After the construction of the new building on Christian Street, the galleries of the old were extended across, so as to make it a two-storied building.

Many healthy and highly-profitable meetings were had in Old Ebenezer after the building of its more modern namesake, and it may not be doubted that in its earlier days it was the scene of highly-successful oratorical efforts by many of the preachers of the olden time, but

> "Few, few are now the strong-arm'd men
> Who worshipped at these altars then."

Here, in that modest little structure, was heard in proclamation the voice of Joseph Jewell, whose spirit many years ago winged its way to realms "where momentary ages are no more." Here, too, William Penn Chandler, whose dust reposes in front of the new building on Christian Street, was wont to exhort the people of Southwark to "flee from the wrath to come." Within those walls were many times heard the silver tones of young Creamer, who was taken from his work in the very noon of life; and Everhard, and Potts, and Woolson, all of whose dust lies mouldering in some part of the grounds attached to the Christian Street church, expounded the Word and guided the believers from the unpretending rostrum of Old Ebenezer.

It is greatly to be regretted that these old landmarks are passing away so rapidly. They are the footprints

of time that are essential to our remembrance of what the fathers endured, that we might grow in the abundant grace that is necessary to our salvation, even as a people.

> "The princely dome, the column, and the arch,
> The sculptur'd marble, and the breathing gold"

by which they are being supplanted in all sections of our country are beautiful to the eye, and most gratifying to a cultured taste, and we would not condemn them; and yet there would be a manifest propriety in retaining at least some of those old-time structures as memorials, not only of a past age, but of the origin of a life that has grown to most gigantic proportions. The time will come in the far-off future, when the earnest Methodist would gladly travel hundreds, or perhaps thousands, of miles to enjoy the gratification of looking upon one of these primitive meeting-houses in its original entirety. Millions of dollars have been expended and other millions will be in the prosecution of archæological discoveries among the ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum, and tourists spend months of precious time and expend large sums of money for the pleasure of gazing on the spot of ground where the Cross of Calvary is said to have been planted.

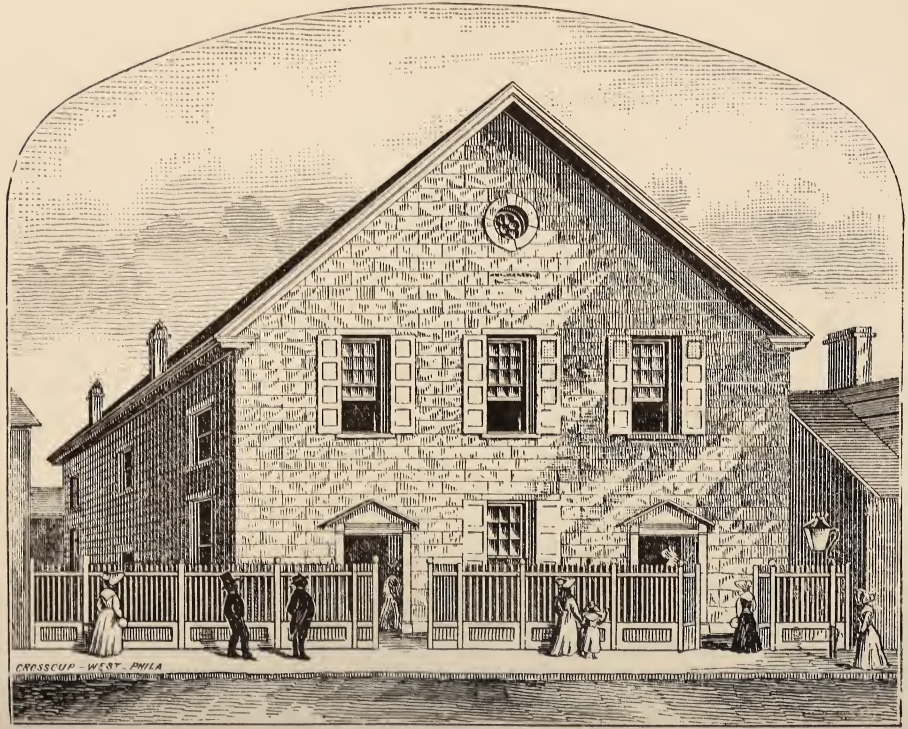
One by one the landmarks of all our history are disappearing, and were it not for the printer's art—"the art preservative of all arts"—we should ere long be made to forget that we have a history; and some of these days, we suppose, when a new generation has taken the place of that now existing, the Vandal hand

of a ruthless if not rude, progress will be lifted for the demolishment of the old hall where Liberty was born and first proclaimed. What more stately or more speaking monument could be reared in commemoration of American Methodism than Old St. George's? Surround it, if you will, with highly-wrought columns and arches; rear in its front crosses of silver and gold, and flank it on the rear with the finest productions of modern art and science; but let the old fortress stand, solitary and alone, in its great glory, and it will mark a page in the history of Methodism such as no man can write.

CHAPTER V.

Pioneers of Methodism—Bethel Colored Church.

INASMUCH as we have had occasion in preceding chapters to recur to the tenacity with which the first preachers of Methodism in this country clung to "the Established Church," it is worth while to remark upon the fact that the material out of which this great organization was formed in America was drawn from an altogether different source, and the same statement is true as to the element from which its membership was derived in England. The first promulgators and founders of organized Methodism in New York were what we may style Dutch-Irish. They were descendants of the refugees who were compelled to fly from the Rhine Palatinates at the beginning of the eighteenth century. These persecuted Germans found a temporary asylum in England, from whence some of them migrated to America, while a number of families were settled, under the patronage of the good Queen Anne, in Ireland. Mr. Wesley introduced Methodism to these refugees, and many of them embraced it cordially, and, in after-years, sons and daughters of the fugitive Palatines found their way to the New World, settling down for the most part in New York city. Philip Embury, whom we think was the first man who preached Meth-



Old Bethel Church (Colored), Philadelphia.

odism in that city, was a son of one of these Palatine families, and had been converted in Ireland under the preaching of Mr. Wesley or some one of the preachers sent over there by him. So of the Hecks, Paul and Barbara, his wife, who was one of the foremost women of early Methodism, and the Switzers, Sauses, the Taylors, Chaves, Gasners, Schuylers, and a few others who were the very earliest of the Methodists in what has grown to be "the Empire City." These people had been, if anything, before their conversion, Lutherans.

THE MORAVIANS,

too, made considerable contribution to the Methodist societies as the work progressed, the manner of worship and doctrines taught by the Wesleyans seeming to be much in sympathy with the ideas of the "United Brethren." The element from which the new denomination drew supplies in Philadelphia was less marked, or rather more diversified, than it was in New York at the beginning, the names of the first Philadelphia Methodists indicating different nationalities, as, for instance, the Budds, Haskins, Kelleys, Harveys, Bakers, etc.

Referring to the Moravians, a somewhat remarkable circumstance is recalled, namely, that Mr. Wesley himself seems to have been converted through the teachings or by inspiration derived from that denomination of Christians, and he very frankly acknowledges his obligation to the United Brethren for the manifestation of Divine grace of which he was made the recipient.

Mr. Wesley, as will be remembered by some of our readers, came to America in 1735 as a missionary to the colonists and Indians in Georgia. While in this country he became acquainted with some Moravians, who, as it appeared, were good Christians, and through his intimate association with these he made up his mind that he had not yet realized the experience of a converted man, and in his journal he says: "I went to America to convert the Indians, but oh! who shall convert me?" And he adds: "I have a fair summer religion; I can talk well; nay, and believe myself, while no danger is near, but let death look me in the face, and my spirit is troubled, nor can I say 'to die is gain.'" Mr. Wesley returned to England, where he renewed and continued association with the "United Brethren," and in 1738, as he informs us, at a Moravian prayer meeting: "I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of death."*

Wonderful and mysterious working of Providence! For several years the great preacher had been calling sinners to repentance and exhorting them to be washed in the blood of the Lamb, and only now was he enabled to read his own title clear; but

"To know ourselves diseased is half our cure."

* This, as will be observed, was many years before any attempt was made to plant Methodism in America as a distinctive denomination.

And so it was with the founder of "this mighty organization."

Right in front of old St. George's church, and between the two doors of entrance, are buried the remains of

EZEKIEL COOPER.

A marble slab covers the grave, and on a tablet of the same material, inserted in the wall of the church, is inscribed the brief record of his birth and death, with other appropriate inscriptions. Mr. Cooper was among the earliest of the Methodist ministers in America, and we shall not err when we add that he was among the most distinguished preachers of his time. He was not an orator in the modern sense of that term, nor was he celebrated as a stylish preacher; neither could he be considered as a particularly eloquent public speaker, but he uttered such burning words of truth and soberness as stole into the hearts of many thousands of men and women. Our first recollection of Mr. Cooper is when we were a boy, at which time we thought him an austere and rather forbidding gentleman,—an impression very likely to be made on a youth by a serious, ever-thoughtful, and devout personage.

He was tall and straight as an Indian, his thin and whitened locks, as we remember him, straggling over a head that was indicative of more than usual intellectual power. Making no pretensions to oratory or style, he was nevertheless a powerful preacher. A cogent, logical reasoner, with great analytical power, he was qualified in an eminent degree to convince the multitude,

and was hence a most successful preacher. He had a "wen," or external tumor, on his neck, which he sought to conceal as well as might be in the folds of an ample white cravat, such as was generally worn by the members of the Conference in those days.

Mr. Cooper was born in Caroline County, Maryland, in the year 1763, and entered the ministry as early as 1785, when he was about twenty-two years of age. His father was an officer in the Revolutionary army, and Ezekiel is supposed to have been awakened, when a boy, under the preaching of Freeborn Garretson, on an occasion when that distinguished Methodist preached to the soldiers in Maryland. He was, of course, contemporary with the Wesleys, with Whitefield, Asbury, Jesse Lee, and all the Methodist preachers of the olden time, and enjoyed the friendship and confidence of the founder of the Church during his life. He was a connecting link of the old and the new. His knowledge and experience,

"Like some grave, mighty thought threading a dream,"

served as an inspiration to the younger members of the Conference, and he was looked up to as truly a father in Israel, dying in 1847, at the advanced age of eighty-four years. Mr. Cooper was styled by those who best knew him "a living encyclopædia of Methodism," and what he did not know about its rise, its progress, and its condition during his lifetime, was perhaps scarcely worth knowing.

His first field of work was on Long Island, after

which he travelled the New Jersey circuit, when there were but ten Methodist preachers in the Conference of that State, and only about twelve hundred members; and when he finished the work of his Master on earth, there were thirty thousand Methodists in that State, with a membership in the United States that was rapidly approximating to a million.

He was at times during his long and active life Presiding Elder of the Boston district, book agent, and editor of Methodist books, by appointment of the General Conference. He was a bachelor, and, what is most extraordinary, left some five thousand dollars of an estate. At the time of his death he was considered to be the oldest Methodist preacher in the world, and the last letter that Mr. Wesley wrote to America is said to have been addressed to Ezekiel Cooper.* Many old Methodists still live in our city who can recall the tones and teachings of this old pioneer and patriarch of the Gospel, and some of them, doubtless, realizing again the ponderous but persuasive words by which they were brought to a sense of their great need for salvation under his preaching, will send up anew thanks and praises to the

> "God of our fathers, from out whose hand
> The centuries fall like grains of sand."

The third Methodist church edifice constructed in our city was

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* "Lose no opportunity of declaring to all men that the Methodists are one people in all the world, that it is their full determination so to continue."—*Wesley to Cooper.*

BETHEL,

on the east side of Sixth Street, above Lombard, where the sons and daughters of Africa have been wont to worship for more than eighty years. This church, however,—as we learn from a sketch of Bethel church, by Mr. W. C. Banton,—was not constructed by the society of white Methodists. Up to about the year 1794, the colored Methodists were connected with St. George's charge, and if they had separate religious services, which we do not understand to have been the case up to that time, the preacher was supplied by St. George's; but at about the period mentioned, serious disagreements took place between the white and colored Methodists, and the latter struck out for themselves, or seceded. Mr. Lednum, in his "Rise of Methodism," says: "The next place of worship erected by the Methodists in this city was for the use of the colored people, and was called Bethel," and adds that it was opened in 1794; but the statement is more liberal toward the whites than the facts in the case, as we have gathered them, would seem to warrant; beside which, Bethel church was not built until the year 1800.* It was very shortly after the secession, or what Mr. Banton considers the ejectment, of the colored people, that "Dickey Allen," as he was familiarly termed in those days, purchased the lot where the church now stands. Subsequently he bought a frame smith-shop and had it

* Previous to the year 1800 the Bethel congregation had worshipped in the old blacksmith-shop.

hauled on to his ground, and in that shanty the colored Methodists of the southern section of the city continued to worship for six years. The new house, which was completed in the year 1800, as may be seen inscribed on a tablet that is inserted in the front wall, was built with the "smithy" standing inside of it, and when the brick structure was completed the smith-shop was taken down and carried out in pieces through the front door.

There would seem to be a good deal of history connected with the early struggles of the colored Methodists that is not found in the books, but it is perhaps not worth while to gather it here in detail. It may be remarked, however, that they owe their existence as a distinctive organization to Richard Allen, one of their own race, who was born a slave in Philadelphia, and who purchased his freedom for the sum of one thousand dollars. Uneducated, illiterate indeed, and learned only from nature, he was rather an extraordinary man for his times.* He had great difficulty in keeping his little flock together for a while, and at one time, when his people voted unanimously in favor of a connection with the English or Episcopal Church, Allen stood almost

* Richard Allen was born a slave to Benjamin Chew, in February, 1760, and was subsequently sold to a Mr. Stokely, of Delaware. He was converted near Dover, in that State, when about twenty years of age. During the Revolutionary war he was a wagon-driver in the army, and after its close began to travel as a preacher among the colored people of Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. At the time of the establishment of the Bethel Society he was recognized as a member of Saint George's.

solitary and alone, but his energy and zeal shortly afterward triumphed. He was the first bishop of "the African Methodist Episcopal Church," and was ordained as such in April, 1816, the ordination ceremony being by prayer and the laying-on of hands by five regularly-ordained ministers, one of them being Absalom Jones, a priest of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Pennsylvania.*

The Bethel church of 1800, although of brick, was a very modest affair. We have been in it when it was packed, as is said of the theatres, "from pit to dome," and we have seen the white boys, who entered not only to see what was going on, but to make fun, hustled out without ceremony. In 1841 the church was rebuilt, and the existing structure is a neat, commodious, and well-appointed affair. The membership is stated at three hundred and twenty-five, with about twenty-five probationers. The African Methodist Episcopal Church connection embraced in 1876 a membership of three hundred and twenty-five thousand, with about sixteen hundred itinerants engaged in the work.

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* This, it will be observed, is an organization distinct from the Methodist Episcopal Church, although its doctrines are the same and its polity similar. It maintains a book and publishing house in Philadelphia, from which is issued the *Christian Recorder*, a weekly paper, B. T. Tanner, Editor.

CHAPTER VI.

Divisions of Methodism—The Methodist Protestant Church—Free Methodists—Wesleyan Methodists.

ALTHOUGH we have had occasion in a previous chapter to remark that Methodism in America has been much less disturbed by dissensions and divisions into sub-sects than in England, it is proper to notice that it has not been altogether free from such contingency. It would be singular, indeed, in a country whose teachings are so liberal as with us, and where the people are supposed to exercise a preponderating influence in the affairs of government, if a great denomination like this should escape the influence and consequences of an unrest that constantly arises in a community whose members feel that they are entitled by right to the largest possible liberty in the exercise of thought and opinion, if not of action; but there is even with the divisions that have taken place among Methodists a homogeneousness of feeling and sentiment as to the vital principles involved that is most gratifying.

There is without doubt much in the practice of Methodism of the present day that had no existence a hundred years ago, and it may be added, with like truth, that much that was seen and felt in the administration of its economies and the pursuit of its purposes, when

first established, is now wellnigh obsolete. That this is so may be a source of regret or otherwise, according to the notions, prejudices, or opinions of different individuals, but it is probably known to very few persons who will read these pages that, notwithstanding the injunction for plainness in dress and habit so persistently urged by Mr. Wesley, he nevertheless sought to engraft upon the new denomination which he founded a Liturgy to be used in the churches by "ministers in black gowns, bands, and cassocks." Such, however, is the force of habit, that we need not be surprised to know that the originator of Methodism clung to the vestments of the "established Church" with something akin to the natural love of mankind for home and its traditions. There is great force in the couplet from Pomfret that

> "What education did at first conceive,
> Our ripen'd eye confirms us to believe."

Mr. Wesley, as we have already seen, believed very much during the first years of his progress which he afterwards discarded as non-essential. At the commencement of work by "the new generation" the use of the prayer-book was deemed a necessary appendage of public worship, but it was very soon found that the preachers in America prayed much better without the aid of a book. They could shut their eyes in extemporaneous prayer, and thus pry open the secret recesses of the heart, from whence such unction would flow as could not possibly be derived from the book. The English had not learned the sentiment, language, and

power of an extempore address, which seemed to be a natural element in the progress of the New World, and even to the present day they have failed to appreciate its wonderful superiority over the set phrases that go into the books.

Dr. Lednum reproduces an old anecdote that illustrates the awkward situations that were wont to arise occasionally, from a too strict adherence to established forms. An unfortunate man had met with an accident by which his leg was broken, and in great pain he sent for his minister to come and pray with and for him. The call was responded to promptly, and, opening his book, the priest began a search for the appropriate collect. He was at first annoyed, then puzzled, and finally confounded, when he was convinced that no provision had been made in the book of prayer for the case of a broken limb, and so he departed without addressing the Throne of Grace, leaving the unfortunate individual to work out his own salvation "without the benefit of clergy." But to return to the divisions of Methodism, as experienced in our country. Leaving out that which was caused by the discussion of the slavery question, resulting in the formation of the "Methodist Episcopal Church South," and passing by the very natural divergence out of which grew the "African Methodist Episcopal Church," the divisions or secessions have been quite immaterial when considered in relation to numbers. The most considerable of these secessions is that which resulted in the organization of what is now known as

THE METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCH,

a denomination that reported a membership in 1876 of 113,405, with 12,236 itinerant and local preachers. The difficulties which brought about this formation occurred in the year 1828, and were probably inspired, but certainly intensified, by the publication of the *Wesleyan Repository*, which was commenced at Trenton, by William S. Stockton, in the year 1820. It is somewhat difficult to understand what was the original or particular cause of complaint that induced this movement, but it may be safely stated as a general discontent on the part of certain persons who advocated a more liberal or democratic policy in regard to the government of the Church. Prominent among the reforms proposed by these persons was the adoption of lay representation in the Conference. They thought that, in the first place, the bishops had too much power; and, in the second place, the exclusive right of representation by the ministers was anti-republican. They objected also to what they considered a very manifest departure from the primitive principle upon which Methodism had been founded.

These objectors, with such other disaffected recruits as could be gathered, many of whom had been expelled on account of their intemperate utterances and revolutionary actions, organized in 1828 as what they termed "the Associate Methodist Reformers." Meanwhile another journal in opposition to the Methodist Episcopal Church had been established, entitled *The Mutual*

Rights. In 1828, at a Conference held in Baltimore, a "Provisional Church" was established, to which the name of "the Associate Methodist Church" was given; and at a General Conference held two years later the title was changed to the "Methodist Protestant Church."

When adopting a constitution and rules for the government of the new denomination, the general features of the old one were maintained; but the Episcopacy and the Presiding Eldership were rejected, and it was also provided that, in the General and Annual Conferences, the representation should be by ministers and lay delegates in equal numbers. The articles of religion as contained in the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church were adopted, with very slight modification as to terms, and most of the general rules that had been promulgated by Mr. Wesley were accepted.

These people seem to have been influenced in their conduct by what is termed "a distinction without a difference." They denied being seceders, and claimed that they were compelled to the course pursued because they had been thrust out from the old connection.

> "A something light as air; a look;
> A word unkind or wrongly taken,"

was doubtless the original cause of trouble, and

> "Still falling out with this and this,
> And finding something still amiss,"

they nursed what were probably but slight grievances until, in their imagination, they grew to be portentous evils. There is not much of the Methodist Protestant

element in Philadelphia, and the denomination is, we believe, without a single church edifice there. For some years they had a church edifice on the north side of Filbert Street, above Eleventh, the pastor in charge being Mr. Stockton, already referred to. He was a sincere and devout Christian, and a gentleman of very considerable ability, but, being for many years in very precarious health, his preaching was not particularly effective. The building referred to is now occupied as the Homœopathic College.

Nearly twenty years ago, or in the year 1860, there was another secession, not of a character, however, to attract much attention. It resulted in the organization of what is now known as

THE FREE METHODISTS,

although for a time the adherents of this new movement were distinguished as "Nazarites." The grievances complained of by these people were of a more serious nature, involving what were aforetime deemed vital principles. They charged and contended that there was a marked decline of spirituality in the old Church, and that for the sake of gain, such worldly practices on the part of the membership as were contrary to the Discipline were tolerated, an indictment which is, alas! too well sustained. They also alleged that there was a plain departure in doctrine from the teachings of the fathers, and they demanded that "the sins of the Church" should be repented of and reformed. They objected to the admission of proba-

tioners as calculated to adulterate and impair the quality of the membership, and, like those who had preceded them thirty years previously, they insisted on the right to lay representation in the Conference.

When they came to the work of organization they sought to make provision for curing the evils of which they complained. They insisted on plain dress and address, and that the members should eschew what are commonly known as worldly practices, vices, and pleasures. They forbade connection with secret societies of any description, and were evidently reaching to something like what was known as the "band system" in the very earliest days of Methodism. They prohibited the use of intoxicating liquors and of tobacco, and they manifestly sought to get as nearly as possible back to the old fountain-spring of Methodism. The success of this movement, however, has not been of much consequence, the membership in 1876 being limited to something less than ten thousand, with about four hundred itinerant and local preachers.

An earlier movement than this, which took place in 1843, resulted in the establishment of what is known as

THE WESLEYAN METHODISTS,

the secession and organization of which grew out of the slavery question, which had for some years previously been a source of unrest and contention in the Conference. The founders of this distinctive denomination were mainly Abolitionists in the East and West sections of our country, which, at an early period of

our history, were noted for opposition to the slaveocracy of the South. Although taking form only in 1843, the anti-slavery movement in Methodism was begun as early as 1839, by the formation of societies in Ohio and Michigan, and Utica, N. Y. The preliminary meeting, out of which this organization grew, was held at Andover, Mass., in February, 1843. This was followed by a formal convention held at Utica, in May of the same year, when one hundred and fifty delegates were in attendance, and the organization was completed. The "Articles of Religion" adopted were mainly the same as those of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the conditions of membership forbade "slave-holding, buying or selling of slaves, or claiming that it is right to do so," and also "the manufacturing, buying, or selling of intoxicating liquors, except for mechanical, chemical, or medicinal purposes;" connection with secret societies is also prohibited. The membership in 1877 is set down at something less than twenty thousand.

Yet one other distinctive element of the denomination remains to be noted,—that is, the "Primitive Methodists," for which is claimed a membership of two thousand eight hundred, with forty-five itinerant and local preachers. We do not understand it as a result of secession, but rather a sort of spontaneous development, such as is constantly taking place among a people who, however much wedded to the affairs of this world, are ever thoughtful of the performance of those duties that will best serve them

"When life's lame-footed race is o'er."

CHAPTER VII.

Another Church for the Colored People—Mission Conferences Established—Bishop Asbury and the Negro Punch.

THE fourth church edifice, if such it might be termed, provided by the Methodists of the olden time, was for the colored people, and was named

ZOAR.

The organization of this society and the construction of the little church building followed the difficulties which, as seen in a previous chapter, culminated in the erection of Bethel as an independent establishment, and the organization, at a later period, of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The race question was thus early a disturbing element, but it was happily disposed of by the organization of the Zoar society or congregation, "the color line," however, being thereby more distinctly drawn.

Up to this period the colored people had worshipped with the whites at St. George's and Ebenezer, but the prejudice of race, supplemented, as was very natural, by an occasional assertion of rights claimed by the weaker and less intelligent membership, which were, perhaps, too frequently denied by the superior race, together with what was at the time considered the un-

fortunate breaking away of the Allen people, was notice to the Church that, if the despised race was to be saved through the influence and power of Methodism, a new line of policy must be adopted; and it was during the year 1794—the year of the Allen exodus—that a lot was purchased on the north side of Brown Street, above Fourth, upon which was erected the first Zoar. It was a very modest, and, indeed, rather uninviting concern, built of wood, and its single room, without adornment of any kind, was very much like a barn, but it served the purpose for which it was designed very well; and many an old slave, doubtless, in those rude times, there called upon God to "come right down now and bress dese chillens," and, in the exuberance of his faith, he would shout:

"See de glory gate unbarred—
Walk in, darkies, past de guard."

It was supplied with preachers from St. George's, being connected with that "charge," as was Ebenezer and others that followed, until the policy of "stationed preachers" for the different city churches in the Conference was adopted. During the year 1838 the old building yielded to the march of improvement, and, being taken down, a new structure was erected, which still occupies the same ground. At this period the congregation did not exceed about a hundred; now the house is always full. The Zoar of to-day is a plain but neat edifice of brick, with peaked front and high-pitched roof, after the style of St. George's and the Old Ebenezer. In a basement are class and Sunday-school rooms,

and to the auditorium are supplemented galleries on three sides, the whole giving a seating capacity of about one thousand. An organ commensurate to the size of the building stands at the south end, and the whole establishment is extremely creditable to the colored people.

When Zoar was first constructed it was what may be termed

A FRONTIER STATION.

At that period the northern limit of the built-up portion of the city was at about what is now Callowhill Street, and then there was a tract of "commons," but north of this was a settled district, which was called "Camptown," from the fact that a part of the army had been encamped there during the war. This outside settlement extended east to the Delaware, where the ship- and boat-building business was a specialty. The market-houses that still stand on Second Street, from Coates to Poplar Street, were, for many years after the city had filled up to the north and west, known as the "Camptown markets," and the first church for the colored people was also in Camptown. Zoar has served as the nucleus for several other societies composed of the sons and daughters of Ham, all of which have remained in the connection until the present time. These additions are John Wesley, Berian, or North Penn, Frankford, and Germantown.

During 1862 and 1863, while the war for the suppression of the Rebellion was in progress, Rev. Adam Wallace was Presiding Elder of the Snow Hill district of the Philadelphia Conference. There was before the

war quite a large membership of slaves and free men and women of color existing in Maryland and Delaware and in the District of Columbia. There was also a very considerable rebel element in those States, especially in Maryland, albeit they were kept within the Union, and the negroes were subjected to great hardship and outrage by reason of their consistent loyalty to the Government and the Union, the latter of which was due to the teachings and testimony of Methodism. They were at times dispersed and driven away from their meeting- and school-houses, and on several occasions a number of their places of worship were burned. Mr. Wallace endured many hardships with the colored people during that trying period, and he was deeply impressed with the necessity for putting them in a more independent and self-reliant position. There were a good many good talkers among the colored men who worked as local preachers, but they could not be admitted into the Conference, and it may be that the white preachers were not always anxious to labor among the negroes.

If the rules of the Conference were changed so that colored men could be admitted and assigned to circuits it would be found that not one in a hundred, perhaps, was qualified for admission according to the requirements of the discipline, and yet they knew quite enough to instruct their own race and work as effective preachers.

The war, with all its successes and reverses, its hardships and calamities, was breaking in upon the prejudice of race that had kept the black man down, and among loyal people there was a more general disposition to

give him a chance. The developments of the war brought new wants, better appreciations, and higher aspirations, and they asked for a colored pastorate as tending to encourage their young men to study and preparation to enter the ministerial field. In the

GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1864,

which was held in this city, Mr. Wallace was a member of the "Committee on the state of the work among the people of color," of which Rev. J. McKendree Reily was chairman, and, influenced doubtless by the urgency of Mr. Wallace, whose recent experience was of such a nature as to enable him to press his views with great force, the committee made report to the Conference recommending the encouragement of "colored pastorates for colored people." They said: "If it be a principle patent to Christian enterprise that the mission field itself must produce the most effective missionaries, our colored local preachers are peculiarly important to us at this time. With them properly marshalled," they said, "what hindereth that we go down and possess the land?" And they presented a preamble and series of resolutions, one of which provided for the organization of one or more "Mission Conferences," where, in the judgment of the bishops, the exigencies of the work may demand it. Methodism had been very successful among the slave population of the South, and the results of the war were forcing new duties on the Conference, which, if not promptly performed, would probably have caused an exodus to other relations.

The report of the committee, after careful consideration by the Conference, was adopted and the resolutions attached to it were passed, and in pursuance of them two Mission Conferences of colored preachers were during that year organized,—one entitled the Delaware Conference, with designated boundaries, and the other, the Washington Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church; and Zoar and all the other preaching-places for colored people in Philadelphia are now known as constituting in part the Philadelphia district of the Delaware Conference. These two organizations are composed exclusively of colored men. The Conferences hold annual sessions, one of the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church presiding. They are thus wards of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, being, however, subject to the discipline, entirely independent; and thus a condition of things, which must eventually have grown into at least an awkward if not a troublesome situation, was happily, and, certainly, most beneficially disposed of, and the people for so long trodden down under the heel of a moral despotism, or ostracized by the prejudice of race, send up anthems of praise to the God of their deliverance.

The colored people are extremely susceptible to religious instruction, and it may not be doubted that this measure will be productive of great good. There is just now an immense field for cultivation in the South, and if it were vigorously worked by Methodist enterprise, the result would be such as to startle the world.

As an illustration of the immediate effect of preaching and prayer among the slaves in the olden time, Bishop Asbury was wont to narrate an incident. He was travelling on horseback in the State of South Carolina, and as he rode along he found a negro sitting on the bank of a stream fishing. He was called "Punch," and the bishop, then only a preacher, was well enough acquainted in the neighborhood to know that the reputation of the fisher was not of the best. Saluting him, he said: "Punch, do you ever pray?" "No, sir." Mr. Asbury got down from his horse, and tying him to a sapling, sat down beside the slave and commenced to speak kindly and earnestly to him on the subject of his soul's salvation. He told him of his sinful condition, the danger to him on account thereof, of the day of judgment, and the condition of the wicked after death. He then pointed him to the goodness and mercy of God, and the all-sufficient merit of the atonement. The negro was greatly impressed, and Mr. Asbury sang a hymn and got Punch down on his knees and prayed with and for him, just as Asbury could pray, and finding the man greatly affected, he encouraged him to pray and not stop till he felt his sins forgiven, and then left him.

The preacher having resumed his horse and journey, Punch put up his fishing-tackle and set out for his cabin. The spirit of grace had already entered his soul, and he was intensely awakened. Relating the circumstance afterwards he said, "I bin tink fo' I got home Punch he gone to hell." He followed the direc-

tions of his instructor, however, and ere long he found peace, and not many months later Punch was a preacher on the plantation with a following of some two hundred slaves, who, through his influence and labors, had been brought to a knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins through faith in Christ. Twenty-five years after the occurrence here related, Punch travelled seventy-five miles on foot to Charleston, by permission of his master, to see Bishop Asbury, who was filling an official appointment in that city.

Having devoted this chapter thus far to a notice of the colored Methodists, it may be as well so to continue it to the end. A correspondent has called our attention to the fact that Dr. Lednum, in his "Rise of Methodism," states that Bishop Allen, the founder of Bethel Church and the African Methodist Episcopal connection, was ordained by Bishop White, of the Protestant Episcopal Church. We were aware of this statement by Dr. Lednum, but it is an error, that gentleman having probably been led into it by the fact, as stated in a previous chapter, that Rev. Absalom Jones, a priest of the same church, assisted at the ordination.*

* There was for several years, as we learn from Mr. Banton's history of Bethel Church, much contention between the whites and the blacks concerning that society. The presiding elder persisted in claiming a right to supply the Bethel pulpit, although several attempts at negotiation therefor had failed. On one occasion, Rev. Mr. Roberts, afterwards one of the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, being the elder in charge, visited Bethel and insisted on preaching there. He was told that he could not do so unless he arranged with the trustees, but he re-

Jones and Allen were together after the secession of the "Allenites" from St. George's, and they voted together in favor of continuing as Methodists; but a very large number—nearly all, in fact, of those who had formerly worshipped at St. George's—having voted in favor of the Episcopalians, Jones went with them and organized the St. Thomas congregation, for which a church was built on Fifth Street, below Walnut. It was by far the pleasanter connection at the time, promising much easier work and better facilities for organization and building. The Methodists at that period, whether white or black, were a poor people, and they doubtless realized frequently the stern truth of the quotation:

> "There's an alchemy
> Which changes tender impulse into scorn;
> The common people call it poverty."

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plied he would preach on the next Sabbath without regard to Richard Allen or the trustees. When he entered the church on the following Sunday, he found a preacher in the pulpit, and all the approaches thereto so barricaded with benches that he could not get near it; and saying "that man has taken my appointment," he left, and made no further attempt to interfere with the "African Methodists."

CHAPTER VIII.

O'Kelley's Rebellion—Strawbridge's Independence.

THESE "reminiscences," as they may fairly be termed, would hardly be complete if we failed to note some occurrences that in the very early stages of the Methodist work were thought to threaten serious consequences, if not disaster, to the cause; they were all, however, harmonized, or disposed of by such promptness and prudence of action as was necessary to the establishment of what even then promised to be a great organization. Among the first manifestations of this nature was what we may not inaptly term O'Kelley's rebellion, which culminated in the secession of a preacher by that name and his friends, say in 1792. Mr. James O'Kelley was a prominent and highly successful minister in Virginia, who was ordained an elder in 1784, and under the then somewhat loosely organized condition of Methodism dropped, as it were, into the position of presiding elder of his district. He is spoken of as a warm-hearted and zealous Christian, possessing, as it would seem, considerable personal magnetism. He developed much influence among the Methodists of his section, and secured a large personal following. He was evidently ambitious, and discovered in his conduct those peculiar traits of character which have for a century been con-

Rev. Francis Asbury.

sidered as indigenous to the soil of the "Old Dominion" in its application to or influence on the sentiments and conduct of the people of that Commonwealth, not only in the olden time but up to the present period.

Virginians have always had their own peculiar notions about government and its methods as well as of men and things generally, and their "abstractions," as developed throughout the years from the Declaration of Independence to the secession of "the Confederate States," have been a proverb.

Mr. O'Kelley's unrest and discontent seem to have been coeval with the organization of a governing power in the Church, for he exhibited a marked, and, indeed, bitter hostility to Mr. Asbury, very shortly after that gentleman had been invested with the robes of the bishopric. In the year 1790, six years after Mr. Asbury's ordination, he wrote to him complaining of the power he exercised, and called upon him to "halt" in his episcopal career, suggesting that if he failed to do so he would be constrained to use his influence against him; and this he did, writing several letters to Mr. Wesley of such a character as to give that gentleman great uneasiness of mind, and by various other means he sought to impair the influence of the bishop and render him, if possible, unpopular among the preachers.

At this period the formal organization of Methodism was in what may be stated as an inchoate condition. It was fairly begun, but the crystallization of the work was by no means complete. There were several Annual Conferences, to which the preachers within their bounds

owed and gave allegiance; but the whole affair was much like the infant government of the United States before the adoption of the Constitution, lacking the cohesive element of power which was essential to secure unquestioning obedience.

THE FIRST COUNCIL.

In 1789 there was held what was called a Council, an organization in the nature of a General Conference, but composed of only the bishops and presiding elders. Mr. O'Kelley was a member of this body, and was understood as being favorable to its construction as a governing power, but, failing to impress its members with his views, he left it greatly dissatisfied, and from that time on he was practically a rebel. Jesse Lee, in his history of Methodism, referring to his conduct, says, it was thought he went to the Council with expectations of being promoted, "and, being disappointed, he returned home greatly mortified." This is probably an exact solution of the matter, for all that is known of him proves that he was an aspiring individual. Acting with O'Kelley was Beverly Allen, who was expelled for immoral conduct. At one time, as we learn, he had among his supporters and followers Mr. McKendree, then a young man, who was afterward, in 1808, elected and ordained as an additional bishop; but McKendree's temporary disaffection arose from misapprehension, or rather misrepresentation, concerning Mr. Asbury, from which he was immediately cured on meeting with him. Even Dr. Coke, one of the two bishops of that day, was

badly shaken in his loyalty by the specious arguments of the agitator, or it may be that he was more alarmed by the extent of O'Kelley's following; for so nervous was he at one time in consequence of the disturbance that he wrote to Bishop White with a view to suggest a union of the Church with the Episcopalians. He did this, as he explained afterward, and when he had seen his error, because he feared for the stability of the Church,—a condition of mind which shows us what dangerous traitors are our fears.*

THE DEMANDS OF THE SECEDERS.

Mr. O'Kelley, however, did not only utter complaints. He proposed what he considered reforms, and it is but fair to say that his propositions were not without merit.

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* Dr. Coke differed from most of his contemporaries who were engaged in the American work. Not less devoted to the cause, nor by any means less earnest in the promotion of it, he was yet less aggressive. He was a man of most amiable disposition, and hence naturally averse to strife. Possessed of large means, he bore his own expenses, in addition to which he was constantly making large expenditures for the benefit of his Master's cause. He may very well be styled the father of Methodist missionary effort, having died at sea on the voyage to India, where he was going for the purpose of installing missionary preachers in that country. He cared less for the establishment of a new church than he did for the spread of God's gospel. In the case of O'Kelley, Mr. Asbury planted his foot firmly down upon his disloyalty, while Dr. Coke, with the kindness of heart for which he was noted, and in the spirit of peace which was characteristic of his nature, was willing to compromise on methods for the sake of what he esteemed the more essential factor of the movement.

There were five of them, and, transposing the order in which we find them written, they were as follows:

First. The organization of a General Conference, to be composed of at least two-thirds of the preachers, "as a check on everything."

Second. The abolition of the "arbitrary aristocracy," —meaning thereby, we suppose, the bishops.

Third. The nomination of presiding elders to be vested in the District Conferences.

Fourth. The limitation of the districts to be vested in the General Conference; and,

Fifth. Preachers to be allowed an appeal from their appointment to stations.

In the main, these were reasonable propositions, and it is a remarkable fact that, with a single exception,— namely, the right of appeal,—they have all been since substantially adopted.

But Mr. O'Kelley was restless and, indeed, revolutionary, and urged his views and reforms with great industry meanwhile, until a General Conference was called and held in 1792. The calling of this Conference, whether looked upon in the light of a concession or not, had disposed of one of his demands, and he determined to make his stand in the Conference on that which we have given as the fifth proposition, and he presented it in the following shape:

"That after the bishops appoint the preachers to their several circuits, if any one thinks himself aggrieved by the appointment, he shall have liberty to appeal to the Conference and state his objections, and if the Confer-

ence approve his objection the bishops shall appoint him to another circuit."

Mr. Lee, in his history, says the debate on this proposition was a masterly one, and that it called forth the strength of all the preachers. The discussion was continued for three days, and for much of the time it seemed as though there was a majority in favor of the proposition. It was urged as a democratic measure, and as being in harmony with the republican sentiment on which the government of the nation was being built up; but it was made so plainly to appear, on the other hand, that with such a provision in the law there could be no cohesiveness in the structure that was being reared, that when the vote was taken the proposition of Mr. O'Kelley was defeated by a large majority; whereupon Mr. O'Kelley, and a few others who supported him, withdrew from the Conference and the connection. This may be stated as the first formal secession in Methodism, but the history of the organization shows how easy it would have been for the irate Virginian to have remained in the connection and had his views practically carried out, with a single exception, and probably have reached the bishop's bench, which would doubtless have satisfied his most darling aspiration; but thus it is that

"Vaulting ambition overleaps itself."

Mr. O'Kelley, leaving the Conference, returned to his Virginia home, and there he rallied his followers for a conflict with the Church which had trusted and

honored him and sent him forth as a messenger of peace, clothed with the panoply of her authority, and shortly afterward he organized what was termed

THE REPUBLICAN METHODIST CHURCH.

But it was no longer a difference of opinion as to modes and methods. The preacher that had erstwhile gone forth to do the work of the Master had fallen out with himself, and, as would seem, with his God. Passion took the place of reason, hate usurped the throne of love, and a vindictive spirit of opposition supplanted the meekness that is required of the messengers of Christ. The "new generation" of Republican Methodists took possession of the preaching-places, and drove out all who refused to conform to their plans and purposes; and they began a system of persecution, and, indeed, outrage, which, in the language of Jesse Lee, was "enough to make the saints of God weep between the porch and the altar to see how the Lord's people were carried away captive by the division." Bennett, in his history, referring to Virginia and North Carolina, says: "In all this region the influence of O'Kelley was very great, and he scrupled not to use it to the utmost of his ability to build up his own cause." And he adds: "Families were rent asunder, brother was opposed to brother, parents and children were moved against each other, warm friends became open enemies, and the claims of Christian love were forgotten in the disputes about Church government." In a small way, O'Kelley's rebellion was a prototype

of that which sought the destruction of the Union in 1861, and its end was alike inglorious. It was inspired by unworthy motives, and fomented by the will of one man, and as he grew old his following fell away. It lacked all the ingredients that are essential to success. What he undertook to set up was not Methodism, but an unreasoning fanaticism, and it perished as do the vapors that melt away at the rising of the sun.

ANOTHER INSTANCE OF DEFECTION,

which, however, did not assume definite form or shape, was that of Strawbridge, who was one of the very earliest Methodist preachers in Maryland, and, indeed, in America. Robert Strawbridge came to this country in the year 1760, probably in company with Embury. He was from the same neighborhood in Ireland, and was doubtless of the Palatine stock, noticed in a previous chapter as having settled in that country in the early part of the reign of Queen Anne. He proceeded to Maryland shortly after his arrival in this country, and settled there with his family, and at once began to preach Methodism at his house, and continued to do so with great success for several years. It is claimed for him that his preaching antedates that at New York and Philadelphia, and that he formed a society in Frederick County as early as 1762. It is also claimed that through his exertions a log meeting-house was built on Pipe Creek, about a mile from his house, in the year 1764 or 1765. Strawbridge was a very different sort of man from O'Kelley, but he entertained very liberal

notions concerning his rights and responsibility for his actions. Without education, he was an earnest and sincere Christian, and was inclined to acknowledge allegiance only to the Master, and maintained his right to administer the baptismal and other ordinances without regard to the discipline of the Church. He was an independent volunteer preacher of the Methodist doctrine, and for a few years was so recognized by the Conference, but he refused to give up his right to administer the ordinances, and, appreciating his great usefulness, and desiring to encourage him, Mr. Asbury proposed to make an exception in his case, and allow him to administer the ordinances under the direction of an assistant, but he declined to recognize either the assistant or the dictum of the Conference, and his name was therefore dropped; but he continued to preach, nevertheless, and a year or two later his name again appeared on the minutes of Conference, but he still maintained his independence, and during the Revolution, when the preachers became scattered, Strawbridge took charge of several stations, preaching constantly, but refusing to recognize any authority. There was no schism, however, nor particular trouble about the matter, and the old man died in peace in the year 1781, well satisfied, doubtless, that he had done the work of his Master and given to heaven many souls.

CHAPTER IX.

A Secession from St. George's—Organization of the Academy Society.

An eminent and graceful writer, in illustration of the unrest of mankind and the pernicious methods that keep a great portion of the human family in a condition that is technically known as "hot water," relates the following incident:

"Many years ago, walking in the sequestered valley of the Cumberland (England) with a distinguished author, we came to a long and desolate sort of gallery, through a wilderness of rocks, which, after narrowing and receding for about two miles, suddenly opened right and left into a little pastoral recess within the very heart of the highest mountain. The verdant circus presented in its centre a beautiful but tiny lake, with a wild brook issuing from it through the road by which we had approached. A few quiet fields were on the margin of the hills looking down upon it from every side; and finally a bundle of seven cottages, clustering together as if for mutual support, in this lovely but awful solitude, and here, if anywhere, it seemed that a world-wearied man should find a perfect rest. 'Yes,' said our distinguished guide, who had guessed our thoughts, 'Nature has done *her* part to create in this place an absolute and perpetual Sabbath,

and, doubtless, you conceive that in these low-roofed dwellings her intentions are seconded. Be undeceived, then. Lawsuits and the passions of lawsuits have carried fierce dissensions into this hidden paradise of the hills, and it is a fact that not one of these seven families will now speak to the other.'" And thus it has been from the beginning

> "Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
> Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
> Brought death into the world and all our woe."

A FIRE-BRAND IN ST. GEORGE'S.

It was in the year 1800, only thirty years after the banner of the cross had been unfurled in old St. George's Church, that a trouble arose among its members. It was not that the society had grown too large for the church edifice, or that its capacity had been in any degree lessened; but society was progressing all around them. Men were leading women to the altar; children were being born into the Church, as it were, and graves were being filled with the dead of many households, and a moving spirit of enterprise had taken possession of a portion of the people. Others of the society, as it seems, failed to realize it; for there were "Bourbons" in those days as well as before, and, indeed, now.

Differences of opinion arose and discussion was inaugurated, and a controversy ensued, out of which grew vexing complications and bitterness, crimination and recrimination. Of such a disagreement—we will

not term it a feud—most persons to whom the subject is presented would like to know, even at a period so distant as three-fourths of a century, who was the author or the aggressor, and what was specially the cause of the strife; but the history of the true inwardness of the schism is so sparse as to be no history at all. Dr. Lednum, who ought to have met during his lifetime some one or more who was a party to the controversy, makes no attempt to explain its cause, while Rev. R. L. Carson, in a most excellent historical address delivered at the seventy-seventh anniversary of Union Church, disposes of that branch of the subject in less than three lines.* Enough, however, has been brought down to us to show that there was such a division among the brethren as could not be harmonized. Doubtless, there were, as is so frequently the case, faults on both sides, and as the little ball of snow is rolled over the carpeted earth, gathering in size and volume at each successive turn, so did the disagreement at St. George's expand, and become intensified until it seemed impracticable for the brethren to longer dwell together under the same vine and fig tree in peace and harmony; and hence it was that immediately succeeding the year already mentioned the Methodists of Philadelphia were brought face to face with the first local secession; remembering all the while, that the Allen exodus of the colored people was rather an expulsion and not a matter of their own choice.

* Services commemorative of the seventy-seventh anniversary of the Union Methodist Episcopal Church, May and June, 1878.

The tradition which reaches us, and gives the only explanation of the cause of the disturbance, is to the effect that "it originated in the Board of Trustees about repairing the church building." It would be more accurate, however, to say that it arose in consequence of a proposition to complete the church edifice, for it is of record that, while galleries were put into the building as early as the year 1791, it was not yet finished in 1798, when Mr. Asbury met the trustees with a view to raise money for that purpose; but the secession movement was not, we are glad to know, marked by violence of any kind, nor was it attended by any such disreputable proceedings as followed upon and became a prominent element in O'Kelley's rebellion.

We have no means of knowing at this late day on which side of the proposition the parties to the controversy ranged themselves, whether the seceders were in favor of the improvement or opposed to it. It is clear, however, that the disagreement had assumed a most threatening aspect in so far as the interest of the church was concerned. Rev. Joseph Everett was at the time presiding elder of the district, and he seems to have made himself particularly offensive to the outgoing party, and application was made to the Conference for his removal; but we find no notice of this fact on the minutes. The journal of Mr. Asbury, however, has upon it this statement:

"Dec. 30, 1800. While in South Carolina I received a letter from the North. I was presented with

a petition from about eighty male members of the society in the City of Brotherly Love, entreating me to do what I had no intention of doing,—that was, to remove Brother Everett from the city."

Rev. Richard Sneath was the preacher in charge at St. George's at the time, and, on a Sabbath in the month of June, 1801, he announced to the congregation from the pulpit that some fifty odd members had withdrawn from the church, and he then read the names of the seceders, amounting in all to fifty-one. Rev. Charles Cavender, an itinerant preacher connected with St. George's charge, also joined the retiring members, and thus the act of secession was consummated, and forthwith the seceders met together and organized an independent society. It may be well imagined that such a movement would create much interest and no little excitement in the community, and that there would be many fears as to its effect on the prospects of the new religious organization; but it was not long before all such anxiety was set at rest.

On the west side of Fourth Street, below Arch, there stood at that time a building which was known as

THE ACADEMY,

the construction of which was commenced in the year 1741, under the auspices of that distinguished and, indeed, extraordinary preacher, George Whitefield. It was not completed, however, until the year 1744, but it is stated by Watson that the great preacher held forth from within its walls when they were only about

four feet above the level of the ground. The Academy, as its name would indicate, was designed for educational purposes, and was built with means raised by subscription, mainly through the influence and exertions of Whitefield, but like so many other enterprises of a similar nature, especially in the olden time, it was encumbered with debt. It does not appear in whom the title to the property was first vested, but in 1749 it was purchased through the instrumentality of Dr. Franklin for "the first Academy of Philadelphia," and in 1753 its name was changed to "The College of Philadelphia," and in 1779 it became the corner-stone and foundation for the splendid institution of learning, the pride of Philadelphia, now known as "The University of Pennsylvania." A remarkable feature, however, in this connection, is the fact that Whitefield, when parting with such right or control as he had in the property, stipulated that there should be reserved forever the right and privilege of occupancy for preaching purposes by itinerant Methodist ministers, who, in those days, according to Watson, were termed "New Lights;" and to the north end of the Academy the straying sheep from the "old fort" repaired and pitched their tent, establishing it permanently as the house of God, and, as they hoped to make it, the very gate of heaven.

LOCATION OF THE SECEDERS.

When the scattered flock was gathered, and the new society was fully organized, it was found that there were about eighty members, the number above that

mentioned as withdrawing from St. George's having been increased by others that had followed afterward, and some who were gathered from the scattered element of Methodism which had not taken root in any established society. The new organization, which is now known as "the Union," does not seem to have taken that distinctive name immediately, but in 1810 it took title to a portion of the Academy property as the "Methodist Episcopal Union Society." At the beginning, and, as we shall see, for about a year, the new society was an independent Methodist church. It nevertheless adhered to all the doctrines, usages, and forms of the church in which the members had been accustomed to worship, continuing to style themselves members of the "Methodist Episcopal" Church, although how they could have sustained that appellation while being an independent body does not appear.

They commenced operations promptly with four preachers, two of whom, Mr. Cavender, already mentioned, and Thomas Haskins, had been in the work as itinerants, the other two being local preachers. They established four classes with leaders, and chose from among the members four stewards, clearly designing in all things to follow out as far as they could in their altered relation the Wesleyan plan of work; but their independence was destined, under God, to be of short duration. The membership was composed of many of the best men of the mother church, and we can conceive that they were not as comfortable in their new condition as they could wish. Such a breaking away,

however justifiable, must have led more or less to estrangements, and out of this would naturally grow jealousy,

> "With hateful thoughts to languish and to pine,
> And feed itself with self-consuming smart."

All that is known of the men who were prominent in this movement proves that no such feeling was desired, and they doubtless sent up many a prayer for such guidance as would restore them to a relation which aforetime had been most pleasant, happy, and profitable to their souls.

THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF 1802

met in Baltimore, and, as may well be supposed, the secession movement of the year previous was a subject of much concern to all the preachers. Doubtless they felt as though they had lost many friends and relations. It could not be otherwise when they reflected that "Johnny Hood, the sweet singer of Israel," had gone out from the mother's bosom, if not in anger, at least in sorrow, and Bishop Asbury must have shed many a tear when he thought of his dear friend, Lambert Wilmer, and his good wife, to whom he owed so much for kind care and attention, wandering away from the old hearthstone; and the idea that Dr. Budd, who had doubtless prescribed for many of the ministers when overtaken by sickness, and North and the Kelleys, and Baker and Haskins and Harvey, and many other old color-bearers in the church were found there no more,

would naturally cause a pang of regret throughout the Conference. And so we find that, after reviewing and discussing the work in Philadelphia, some one of the brethren moved a resolution to this effect: "That the Conference advise and recommend Bishops Asbury and Whatcoat to offer to our friends who have formed themselves into a religious society, or congregation, in the Academy, a stationed preacher, upon such honorable terms as they may agree upon." One man in the Conference, whose heart had evidently got into the wrong side of his body—for such an occurrence we are told has been known—voted no, while every other member voted yea.

In response to this action, which was promptly communicated, the Academy people wrote to the bishops that they would receive a preacher from the Conference on the following conditions, which were not only just and honorable, but which laid the foundation for steps of progress in the economies of Methodism which have proved most advantageous:

First. That we be considered as members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in full connection, and put into the full enjoyment of our rights and privileges as private and official members, according to the Discipline thereof, as though we had never separated therefrom.

Second. That we be considered as a separate station, enjoying our rights and privileges, and as separate and distinct from, and having no dependence or connection with, other stations in this city.

We are quite sure the Conference and the bishops were more than glad to accept these propositions; and, accordingly, we find that on the 5th of May the following letter was forwarded in reply:

"DEAR BRETHREN: We accept your propositions, and shall, in our judicious arrangements, provide an acceptable preacher for you, in hopes that you will find the benefits and blessings and happily increase in grace and members. So we wish and pray who are your pastors.

"Your brethren, your servants, for Christ's sake.

"FRANCIS ASBURY,
"RICHARD WHATCOAT."

In pursuance of this arrangement Rev. George Roberts was appointed as pastor for the reconstructed establishment, where he remained during the years 1802–3, and thus were the secessionists of 1801 brought back again into the Methodist Episcopal Church. But, harmonized as all differences were, the organization of what was for many years known as the Academy Society constituted a new development in local Methodism. With the seceders went in the main also what there was of wealth in the old congregation, and it may not be disguised even now that, in some way or other, there very shortly grew into existence a very well defined line on the field of Philadelphia Methodism, the more "respectable" people in the connection, to use a fearfully hackneyed term,—meaning such as have more of this world's goods than others,—drifting into the new

establishment; but the vacant places in St. George's were soon filled up again, and the Master's work went on without interruption, until ere long the members of both societies had renewed occasion to render up thanks to

> "The God who starred the uplifted sky
> And flow'red the trampled sod"

for a covenant unto His people, that those who trust in Him shall not perish, but inherit eternal life. Bishop Asbury, in his journal of the year 1802, mentions that he preached for the first time "in the College Church or Academy," on Sunday, August 1, his text being Exodus xx. 1–24. And he adds, "After sermon we had sacrament: we had seriousness and attention."

CHAPTER X.

A New Departure in Local Methodism—St. Thomas's Church a Failure.

THE history of the world may be said to be a reflex of its creation. From the hour when "God said let there be light" until the present moment it has been one of advancing progress, and the spirit of man, most wonderful of all creations, has sought to climb nearer and nearer to the great fountain of intellectual existence and power. For centuries, even after the beginning of what we term the Christian era, the world moved forward under a greatly clouded civilization, marked for much of the time by idolatry, licentiousness, tyranny, and persecution, but there was progress in art, progress in literature, and progress in the material elements that conduce to the welfare of society, even amid the savagery that has disgraced some of the periods of the past. The establishment of the Christian Church, however, has, without doubt, been the most potent agent of ancient and modern civilization, and to the teachings of the Church, as reformed by time and experience and on its modern basis, are we indebted for the splendid progress of the century in which we are living, as well as that which immediately preceded it. In the language of Channing, "Religion surpasses all other principles

in giving free and manifold action to the mind," and the more active, vital, and, indeed, aggressive the spirit of a people's religion, the greater will be their progress: and thus we find at every step, and pause in the consideration, of the great organization which had John Wesley for its founder, a spirit, power, and breadth of progress that has approximated to the marvellous.

The Academy society, whose inauguration we witnessed in our last chapter, has from the first been largely imbued with this quality, and exhibited such a measure of enterprise as warranted the suggestion heretofore made that the secession of 1800 constituted

A NEW DEPARTURE IN LOCAL METHODISM.

The seceding members and those who joined them subsequently have ever been ambitious to excel in good works, having on one occasion, as was considered from the result of the movement, overstepped the bounds of prudence, led thereto, however, as we are bound to believe, by what may be considered a pardonable ambition to take the lead of their contemporaries in pushing forward the work of Methodism and securing for it a greater prestige.

We have already mentioned that the Academy society obtained title to the ground on which the present "Union church" edifice stands in October, 1810, but it should be stated also that the purchase thereof, including that portion of the old building in which the congregation for many years worshipped, was made for

and on account of the society as early as April, 1802. The portion of "the college" property purchased was at the south end of the building and fronted south, while the north end of the building fronted east, the whole standing back from the street as now; and when the southern portion of the building was purchased it was conveyed to Messrs. Thomas Allibone, Caleb North, and Thomas Haskins, who held the title for the society until the date above mentioned. Its cost was nine thousand dollars, three thousand being paid in cash and a mortgage given for the remainder. A portion of this original purchase, fronting on Fourth Street, was afterward sold to Adam Konigmacher, and became a part of the site on which the Merchants' Hotel now stands, an operation which enabled the society to free itself from debt and have still left the necessary ground on which to erect a new church building.

The society moved into its new purchase some time during the year 1802. It was, of course, a very different affair from the fine building now known as "the Union." It stood in a back yard, as it were; the front, as before remarked, facing south, and overlooking the back yards of surrounding buildings. It had two entrance doors. The size of the building was seventy feet east and west by forty-five north and south, and the pulpit was at the north end of the church. Mr. Carson, in his address referred to in our last chapter, says the membership at this early period seemed to be much scattered, and notes the fact that Mr. Wilmer's class met at "Centre Square," where the Public Build-

ings are now being erected, while that of John Hewson met somewhere in Kensington; and he mentions also that the first recorded marriage was solemnized by Mr. Cavender in October, 1801, the parties thereto being Joseph Ball and Hester Campbell.

The north end of the old Academy or College building still stands on the original site, a memorial of the olden time, but it is necessary that the visitor should enter within its walls ere he can recognize the structure whose foundation-stone was laid by the celebrated Whitefield. Right up against the front of the old building, an addition, in which stairways are placed, has been erected, with a modern and tasteful front, but the old college hall is intact. It is now occupied for the manufacture and sale of shoes, thus illustrating

"To what base uses we come at last."

WESTWARD THE STAR OF EMPIRE TAKES ITS WAY, even to the setting sun, and so the city, now become so great and populous, which for many years in the olden time hung along the river shore, extending in the main only north and south, began after a while to stretch away to the west, and with a true missionary spirit the brethren of the Academy were inclined to follow and advance their lines into the newly-occupied territory, and in the year 1813, or thereabout, we find them purchasing ground on the east side of Tenth Street, below Market, with a view to erect there another church edifice. We have said that the Academy people were ambitious and enterprising; they were something more,

for it would seem they desired to cope with St. George's and become "a charge"—a mother in Israel, with offspring settled around her in homesteads of her providing, and for a time it seemed as though this hope or ambition would be realized.

Dr. Lednum, referring to this subject, says, It was about the year 1811 that the heads of the Academy society engaged in building a church on Tenth Street, between Market and Chestnut, which they called

ST. THOMAS'S;

but Mr. Carson, in his anniversary address, thinks "it must have been during the first pastorate of Mr. Emory, that is to say, 1813–14, that the members of Union became ambitious of extending their influence by the establishment of a new congregation," and, however it may be about the date of the enterprise, it is quite certain that at about this period the Academy people constructed the building on Tenth Street, which is now known as the Protestant Episcopal Church of St. Stephen. The new church was opened to public service on the 23d of April, 1815, Bishop Asbury preaching the dedicatory sermon. It is related in this connection that while funds were being raised for the purpose a member of the building committee called on Stephen Girard and solicited a donation. Mr. Girard, as will be remembered, owned the block of ground immediately west, extending from Eleventh to Twelfth Street, and, although not much of a contributor to church enterprise, and entertaining peculiar views on the subject, he con-

tributed five hundred dollars, which he doubtless did as a sort of business investment.

At about the same time the Sansom Street Baptist church, which has been since converted into an extensive stable, was in course of construction, and Dr. Stoughton, the pastor, having heard of Girard's liberality toward the Methodists, visited him, and solicited a subscription to his enterprise. Still having an eye to business, doubtless, the merchant and banker gave the doctor a check for some two or three hundred dollars. Mr. Stoughton didn't think that quite the fair thing, and he politely remonstrated with the banker, saying, "Why, Mr. Girard, how is this, you gave the Methodists five hundred dollars, and you give me only about one-half?" Mr. Stoughton didn't know his man, or he would never have ventured on such an experiment. Girard said, "Ah, let me see that again," and receiving the check from the hand of the doctor he deliberately tore it in pieces, saying, "If you cannot be satisfied with what I choose to give, you can go without anything;" and that was an end of the matter. This incident was quite characteristic of Girard. He took little interest in churches. Morality and fair dealing constituted his religion. He was, however, really a charitable person during life, and the magnificence of his bequest to the orphaned poor constitutes an imperishable monument to his memory. The gifts noted are the more remarkable because of his aversion, not to religion, or even churches, but to preachers, whom he held responsible for the rival sectarianism which he

abhorred, and which induced him to prohibit the entrance of preachers into the college which bears his name. In justification of that provision in his will he says, "I do not mean to cast any reflection upon any sect or person whatsoever, but as there is such a multitude of sects, and such a diversity of opinion among them, I desire to keep the tender minds of the orphans who are to derive advantages from this bequest free from the excitement which clashing doctrine and sectarian controversy are so apt to produce."

The new church having been completed and organized, two preachers were assigned to the Academy, which now came to be "a charge," on the same principle that three or four were appointed to St. George's. The first two were Revs. Joseph Lybrand and George Sheets, and they preached alternately in the two churches. Mr. Lybrand was of an old Philadelphia family. He entered the ministry when very young, and soon developed marked ability as a pulpit orator. He was a person of fine and commanding presence, bold in his utterances, eloquent of speech, and enthusiastic and aggressive in the cause of his Master. His preaching was of the Whitefield order, but somewhat more finished, and his success in winning souls was great.

The time chosen for the St. Thomas enterprise seems to have been inauspicious, and it proved

A FAILURE.

The experiment was continued until about the year 1820, when it seems to have been abandoned, for in

1821 but one preacher was sent to the Academy, and in 1823 the church edifice was sold to the Episcopalians. It was not, however, the "St. Stephen's" of to-day; on the contrary, notwithstanding what has been said about its architectural superiority over all other church buildings in the Methodist connection of the time, it was a plain and unpretentious structure, presenting to view what we have styled the traditional peaked front and high-hipped roof. The present front and towers, which contain "the chimes of St. Stephen's," are of more modern construction, as is the wing, or Bird mausoleum, extending to the alley on the north side. The enterprise was not only a failure, causing a loss of several thousand dollars to the Academy society, but it had for awhile the threatening aspect of a really dangerous business. It gave rise to jealousy and heart-burning among the members, for although not to say a grand affair, it was a better building than the old Academy, and it was better finished and furnished, and just as surely as human nature is attracted to the beautiful, the "upper crust" of the society stole away to the new and certainly more cheerful establishment.

This fact, supplemented, perhaps, as is frequently the case under such circumstances, by the putting on of "airs" by the St. Thomas portion of the society, quite naturally called up the spirit of the unregenerate old Adam, and it began to look as though a schism was arising that might result in what was most of all to be deplored—open hostilities. Dr. Lednum says, "A number of the Academy members, entertaining the

notion that this fine church, as they called it, was built to accommodate a few of the most wealthy Methodist families, refused to worship in it, and started a prayer-meeting, at the same hour fixed for preaching at St. Thomas's, in the region of Thirteenth and Vine Streets, which was the germ of Nazareth Church." But the operation worked badly in other respects. Both preachers were not alike acceptable, and something akin to partisanship might grow up, indeed, did at one time, giving rise to much trouble. During one of the years that two ministers were appointed to the Academy, one was a much more popular speaker than the other. He might not have preached a better sermon, but his style of oratory was more fascinating, and, as a consequence, at whichever of the two houses he preached, there was a huge crowd, while at the other one there were a great many empty benches. This was disagreeable to the less cultured, or, at least, less popular preacher, and it was productive of an unpleasant, and, as was thought, unprofitable state of affairs, and the trustees, after being much puzzled, determined to experiment on the subject. They proposed to Brother —— that on such morning, for instance, as he preached at St. Thomas's, he would announce to the congregation that on the following Sabbath morning he would preach the same sermon at the Academy, thus giving all an opportunity to judge thereof without the trouble of migrating or itinerating between the two churches; but Brother —— failed to realize either the philosophy or the utility of the suggestion, and therefore refused to adopt it.

For the year 1816–17, Rev. John Emory, who was subsequently raised to the bishop's office, and Rev. James Ridgway were the pastors in charge, and during the following year (1818), under the pastorate of Revs. James Smith and John Potts, the society was incorporated by act of assembly as

THE EPISCOPAL METHODIST UNION CHURCH,

and thus the legal status of "Academy" was destroyed, but the old name clung to the church and congregation for many years afterward, and, indeed, is even yet so spoken of by many of the old generation of Methodists. For several years preceding 1833 there had been some quiet discussion concerning the inadequacy of the old church building and the necessity for a new one to take its place. The congregation, although subjected to constant draughts as members removed their residences into more distant quarters of the city, had greatly increased in numbers, and there was for years a real lack of the necessary accommodations, besides which, as was most natural, the increased prosperity of members and the more refined style of living which had followed upon the growth and improvement of the city seemed to render a more modern style of building a positive need. "The official men of Union," as stated by Mr. Carson, were "from the beginning men of broad views, of high-toned character and of kindly sympathies;" and at a meeting of the male members of the society, held in February, 1833, the proposition to construct a new house was not only favorably considered, but crystallized

into a substantial resolve. The vote on the resolution which authorized the trustees to take down the old building and erect a new one was taken by yeas and nays, and was sixty in the affirmative and fourteen in the negative. The work was promptly begun, and in a few weeks there remained nothing of the old Academy but the débris of the material that, with much labor and pains, had been brought together nearly a century before, but—

> "They are all passing from the land,
> These churches old and gray,
> In which our fathers used to stand,
> In years gone by, and pray."

The last closing and formal sermon preached in the old house was by Rev. Joseph Holdich, whom we remember with great pleasure as one of the strongest and best-cultured of Methodist ministers. His text, taken from Isaiah, was, "The place is too strait for me; give place to me that I may dwell," and we may add that the sermon was a production worthy of the scholar who presented it. The funds necessary for the construction of the new church were subscribed within a month, and on the 13th of April, the old building having been demolished, a huge block of stone from it was laid at the southwest corner in the foundation, Mr. Holdich making an appropriate prayer on that occasion.

The corner-stone proper for the new structure was not laid until the 13th of May, at which time the basement story of the new edifice had reached the proper height. The formal ceremony of laying the corner-

stone was conducted by Rev. Joseph Rusling, who, besides being a most effective preacher, was one of the sweet singers of Methodism. The new Union was completed and dedicated in December of the same year, Rev. Charles Pitman, then pastor in charge, preaching the dedicatory sermon, and at this time the membership was reported as at eight hundred and twelve. This new building caused a sensation in local Methodism, and many were the fears lest the brethren would, in the pride of their hearts, forget their religion and their God. It was at the time of its completion the finest Methodist church in the country, and although plain, and without material ornamentation or adornment, its auditorium is to-day excelled by very few if any churches in the connection.

CHAPTER XI.

Two Important General Conferences, 1808–1820—Three Bishops Die.

THERE is much, while studying the history of Methodism, to cause one to linger about the threshold of the present organization. One of the most soothing panaceas to old age, perhaps, is the liberty that is vouchsafed to it of dwelling once more, in spirit at least, among the scenes and pleasures of youth. The humble old homestead, with its roof of thatch, looms up in grateful contrast to the brownstone front of later years, and the waters of the bubbling spring which we were wont to quaff from a horn cup are sweeter in recollection than the sparkling wines of Italy or sunny France. The old schoolmaster, too, whose tyranny has been mellowed down into love by Time's philosophy, and the apprenticeship, whose task we thought so hard, all rise up again in imagination, transformed, as it were, into angels, bearing blessings. There is something more than this, however, to keep us lingering about the portals of early Methodism. The tree that is now spreading its branches across seas, and over continents, dropping its fruit into the lap of nations, was subjected to many vicissitudes and dangers, and there were times when its growth and, indeed, its life were seriously threatened.

As has been before remarked in these chapters, the construction of the Methodist polity was coeval with that of the American government. Having broken away from the fiction of the "divine right" of kings, and conquered a peace, the American people everywhere throughout the land, as is evidenced from the discussions of the period, were extremely jealous of anything like a concentration of power, and the same sentiment was found to exist among the Methodists concerning their church organization and the power that might be created for its government. It was hostility to the episcopal function and the power with which it was invested that gave rise to O'Kelley's rebellion, and it was the indisposition to submit to control of any description that caused the difficulty with Strawbridge, as referred to in a previous chapter, and there was manifestly, in all the early Conferences, a careful scrutiny and guarded watchfulness by preachers, as to the sources of power and the exercise thereof. The republican idea would suggest the largest liberty, while the conservative principle would necessarily demand restraints, and to harmonize these in ecclesiastical conjunction was a work requiring great delicacy, forbearance, and, at the same time, decision. It was with the Methodist Church the same as with the American government. Both were new and in a certain sense experimental. During the first decade after the peace in 1783 the form of government for the republic was in the course of construction, and the public mind was constantly occupied with the subject, critically scanning every movement or

proposition that might affect the rights and liberties of the people. This was also true as to Methodism, which was on trial during these years. Ever and anon the structure would be like a reed shaken with a strong wind, but the brethren would grasp it firmly with both hands, and, watering it perhaps with their tears, steady it until the gale would abate, and then through prayer and by mutual concessions new and supporting influences would be employed for its protection and future growth.

It was in such a condition of the public mind as we have indicated, concerning the rights and powers of government, that

A SIGN OF DANGER TO THE CHURCH

was manifested and developed in the General Conference of 1808, which for a time seemed portentous of evil to the new organization, threatening indeed a breaking up of the body by a secession of the Eastern and Western Conferences. At that time, as now, the presiding elders were appointed by the bishops, and the General Conference was composed of all the ministers belonging to the several Annual Conferences. This arrangement was not satisfactory to some of the preachers. From the earliest period there had been more or less of unrest concerning the mode of appointing presiding elders, but the Eastern and Western Conferences objected specially, and strongly, to the construction of the General Conference. They complained that they were powerless in the body, and that, practically, they

had no voice in its deliberations, or at least its action; and this was true, in fact, for upon any question the preachers of the Philadelphia and the Baltimore Conferences could outvote the other five, although their vote was combined. At the General Conference of 1804 a proposition had been made to change its character to a delegated body, the representatives of the several Annual Conferences to be chosen according to a fixed ratio. The resolution was voted down, but with an understanding that the subject should be presented to and discussed in the several Annual Conferences. This was done, and of the seven Conferences then existing, five had voted in favor of the proposition and two against it. There were other measures of importance concerning the government of the Church brought forward at the Conference of 1808, and we think we may say that it was felt that the principle of episcopacy was held by such an uncertain tenure as to require that it should be supported by every possible influence, and the Conference of that year is stated as having been one of the most important ever held.

At an early stage of the proceedings a committee of two preachers from each Conference was appointed to consider and report upon the several questions that had been presented. This arrangement gave to the Eastern and Western Conferences a majority of the committee, and secured to them a favorable report on the proposition in which they were most interested. The whole ground of church polity seems to have been gone over

and covered by this committee and Conference. Ezekiel Cooper, Joshua Soule, who was afterward elected bishop, and who went out of the connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church South, and David Bruce, who was one of the earliest pioneer preachers, were appointed a sub-committee, each of whom drew up an outline of a report, that of Mr. Soule being finally adopted by the general committee and presented to the Conference. The report contained a resolution providing for the election of presiding elders, and also one changing the character of the Conference to a delegated body, and another defining or limiting the powers of the Conference in regard to the organic laws of the Church, and especially denying any right to change the then existing principle of episcopacy, which, as before remarked, seems to have been for quite a number of years held as in danger.

Upon this particular subject Mr. Soule's proposition declared that the Conference "shall not change or alter any part or rule of our government so as to do away episcopacy, or to destroy the plan of our itinerant general superintendency," while that of Mr. Cooper provided that "they shall not do away episcopacy or reduce our ministry to a presbyterial parity." There was long-continued and earnest discussion on these several propositions, and we recall the circumstances of this Conference thus minutely that the reader may appreciate the delicacy of the situation, and the dangers to which the structure of Methodism was exposed. The episcopal function especially required most careful treatment, and,

indeed, nursing, and it was not for some years after the period under consideration that it was settled into the distinguished and exalted position that it occupies to-day. But this was not the question that

THREATENED SECESSION.

Finding that the discussion was taking too wide a range, and desiring the Conference to be brought to action, Mr. Cooper moved to postpone the consideration of the report, so that he might offer a definite proposition, and this motion having been agreed to, he submitted a resolution providing "that each Annual Conference respectively, without debate, shall annually choose by ballot its own presiding elders." This resolution was under consideration during three days, and when the question was taken it was defeated, the vote being fifty-two yeas and seventy-three nays. The proposition for a Delegated Conference was then introduced, and after some discussion it was also defeated, the vote being fifty-seven in its favor and sixty-four against it. This was the rock on which the Conference was about to split, and in all probability fall in pieces. Murmurs of dissatisfaction and discontent passed from one to another after the result of the vote was announced, and hurried sentences escaped from the lips of the defeated ministers. The clouded brow of the Virginian, the frown of the New Englander, and the sharp retort of the South Carolinian all indicated danger of a storm. Some of the preachers attached to the Philadelphia and the Baltimore Conferences

became nervous, doubtless feeling already that they had exercised their superior power with too little discretion.

The New England preachers left their seats, and began to gather up their papers, and, picking up their hats, they announced their determination to retire from the Conference, which they did. They were followed at once by the Western members, but they all left more in sorrow than in anger, and the remaining members, surveying what might, and probably would, ere long, be a wrecked bark, were moved accordingly. The brethren who left the room said they did not propose or intend to make any trouble in their districts, but that their presence here appeared to be entirely useless. They were, without doubt, badly treated, and we very much fear that the motive which conduced to the action of the majority was not a commendable one. Five out of the seven Annual Conferences having instructed in favor of the delegated system, it ought to have been at once ratified, especially as it must have been seen that ere long the Conference, under the then existing plan of representation, would become so unwieldy as to be unmanageable. The majority, however, upon reflection, seem to have relented, or, more properly speaking, perhaps repented, of their folly. The retiring members remained in town until the next day, and Bishops Emory and McKendree, the latter of whom was elected at that session, took the matter in hand with a view to harmonize the differences, and so successful were they that the seceding members returned to the Conference

on the next day, when the resolution for a Delegated Conference being again submitted, it was agreed to by a larger vote in its favor than had before been cast against it; and then the disagreement that was erst so portentous of evil seemed but to awaken

"New beauties, like flowers, that are sweetest when shaken."

THE MOVEMENT TO ELECT THE PRESIDING ELDERS continued for many years to be "a bone of contention." It was during all the early years of Methodism a popular measure. It was considered more democratic, or republican, as the reader may please, and hence more in conformity with the sentiment of the people and the times, and it was a periodical question for discussion at each meeting of the general body; and it came up again at the Conference of 1820 with more strength than at any time before, giving the Conference much trouble.

At this time there were three bishops in office, Messrs. McKendree, George, and Roberts. Bishop George was an avowed advocate of the proposed new rule, while his colleagues doubted its constitutionality, and were hence against it. At this session it was determined to elect an additional bishop, Mr. McKendree's health being feeble. The names of Joshua Soule and Dr. Bangs were presented, and the former being elected, the circumstance was considered as a defeat of the proposed new rule, Mr. Soule being very pronounced against it. The advocates of the election scheme, however, were extremely persistent, and continued their

canvass in its favor, and an attempt was finally made to get up a compromise, under which the bishops would nominate and the preachers elect, and the Conference became so much muddled in regard to the matter that, through a misunderstanding, many opponents of the measure voted for it, and it was carried by a very decisive vote.

In consequence of this action Bishop Soule refused to accept the office to which he had been elected, and declined to be ordained—in fact, resigned; and the Conference, having concluded that it had committed a blunder which in war is said to be a crime, made haste to correct it by passing a resolution suspending the operation of the new rule for four years. But there was no abatement of the excitement which had grown out of the subject, and it continued to be a matter in controversy, and the suspended rule hung, like Mohammed's coffin, between heaven and earth until the General Conference of 1828, when, as though it were a ghost haunting every step of the Conference, the members determined to dispose of it, and, accordingly, passed a resolution formally rescinding and repudiating what had grown to be an obnoxious measure, although untried; Bishop Soule having meanwhile, in 1824, been again elected.

But the church continued to grow and spread its influence wonderfully, notwithstanding these controversies. Three of its bishops died meanwhile, each with the harness on his back. Bishop Whatcoat rendered up his life to the God who gave it in 1806, and Bishop

Coke, who spent most of his time in England travelling, died in 1814, while on the voyage to India, where he was going for the purpose of establishing the missionary work. Mr. Asbury, whose memory ought to be specially dear to Philadelphia Methodists, died in great peace, surrounded by friends, at Spottsylvania, Virginia, on the 31st of March, 1816, in the seventieth year of his age. He was, without doubt, a most remarkable man. As preacher, organizer, and administrator he was without an equal in the establishment of Methodism in America. He had in combination all the qualities necessary for pioneering and consummating a great undertaking. Childlike in heart, loving and affectionate, he was strong as a giant in his faith, and brave as a lion in the prosecution of the work of his Master. To no other man does American Methodism owe so much as to Asbury. With an extremely moderate education, he was endowed with extraordinary natural abilities. His preaching was powerful and convincing, and his executive qualifications were of a superior order. To these he added great industry and perseverance, and his endurance was for many years wonderful, and when his health and strength of body gave way he caused himself to be carried into the pulpit, and, seated on a table, so that he would be raised above the preacher's desk, he proclaimed to the last the terrors of the law and the promise of the covenant. Modest and unassuming, he devoted his life exclusively to the work of the Master, and, unlike the fashionable preachers of the present day, he refused to receive for his services a dime more than

would pay his very moderate expenses. He discarded

"The train of pride, the impudence of wealth,"

and, if he were to witness the arrogance of the former and the display of the latter, as seen in many of the Methodist churches of to-day, he would be tempted to exclaim: "My God! my God! why has this people deserted Thee!"

CHAPTER XII.

More New Churches—A Great Preacher.

THE movement of Philadelphia Methodism since the establishment of the Old Academy Society has been steadily progressive, keeping pace in its improvements with the growth and extension of the city. Within four years after the secession from St. George's heretofore noticed, a Methodist society was formed within what was afterward known as the Kensington district, and during the year 1804 the Kensington Methodist Episcopal church edifice was erected on the corner of what are now known as Richmond and Marlborough Streets. For many years this church was known to the public only as

THE OLD BRICK,

and although the original building has given place to a new and greatly more spacious one, the cherished name of the past is still applied to it. The Kensington district in colonial times was a sort of outlying settlement or village, like that of Germantown. The locality was at a very early period rendered somewhat famous by reason of its containing within its boundaries the Old Elm, or treaty tree, under which William Penn met the Indians and concluded a treaty with them in 1682. The inhabitants of the neighborhood in the

olden time were chiefly engaged in the business of fishing and boat and ship building, industries which afford the means of employment and subsistence to many of the people at the present day, and when "the Old Brick" was constructed the locality which is now so densely populated was but sparsely inhabited.

Methodism took root in Kensington at a very early period after its introduction in the city, for there are traditions of its being preached with success under the Old Elm Tree and under the sheds along the river shore for years previous to the beginning of the present century. One of the classes of the Academy society, that led by John Hewson, met somewhere in Kensington, and it is quite probable that a class connected with the St. George's society met there before any regular church organization was effected. The men of the olden time in Kensington, and, indeed, the women also, were an industrious and hard-working set of people. In many cases the former fished at night, and rested and slept while their nets were drying in the sun during the day, their wives, meanwhile, marketing the produce of their industry in "the city." Up to a very late period there was a section of the district or neighborhood popularly known as "Fishtown;" but the ship and boat building business gave employment for many years to large numbers of these hardy workers. If they were in those early days untutored, or even uncouth, they were yet a sensitive and most susceptible people, and hence, likely to take hold quickly on such a presentation of the Gospel as would be made by the Methodist preachers,

and to be strongly impressed by the prayer-meetings which, in so many cases, formed the nucleus of the different church organizations that have been built up in all parts of our extended country.

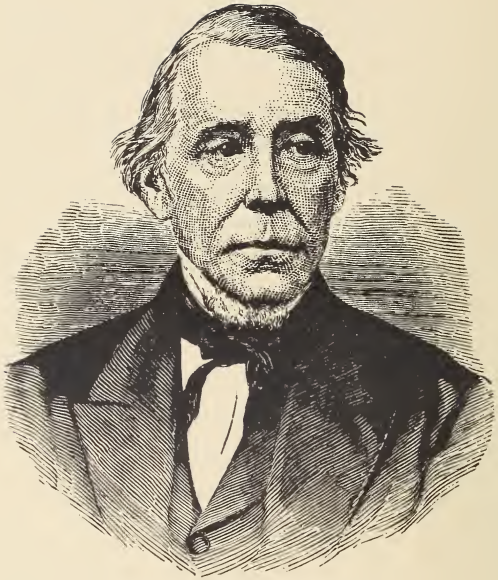
The "Old Brick" was a small building, very plainly constructed and furnished after the old and primitive style, but it was during the years of its existence the scene of many refreshing and greatly profitable revivals. It was enlarged within the year 1833, and to some extent made to conform to more modern notions, but as the old district filled up the congregation increased to such an extent as to render a larger house absolutely necessary, and in 1854 the cradle of Kensington Methodism was made to yield to the irresistible demands of modern progress, and demolished to make place for the present more spacious and commodious edifice, which is in point of seating capacity, we believe, the largest Methodist church building in Philadelphia, the dimensions of the building being ninety by sixty-five feet.

The population of the city, with its annual increase, still continuing, along up to 1820, to crowd as nearly as practicable to the river shore, an additional Methodist church was erected in 1816 on St. John Street, near to where the Cohocksink Creek crossed it. This society was another offshoot from old mother St. George's, and the congregation continued to worship there until 1850, when they built and removed to a new church on Third Street, near Beaver. Meanwhile, preaching had been established in Germantown, and at about the be-

ginning of the present century a small house of worship was erected there, and in 1818 and 1819 Methodist meeting-houses were erected in the outlying villages of Olney and Holmesburg.

THE OLD AND THE NEW.

We would be unmindful of the teachings of the world, and indeed all nature, if we failed to appreciate and acknowledge that Methodism to-day is vastly different from what it was in the beginning. Its principles and doctrines are the same, but whether they are considered as vital as in the olden time, and whether or not they are insisted on and adhered to in practice with the same tenacity as of yore, are questions that we will not here discuss. If, however, it may not be urged that new methods of worship have been introduced and adopted, it may at least be asserted with entire safety that the *style* of worship has been greatly embellished, and, layman as we are, we may perhaps not challenge its legitimacy. It will be conceded that the preaching is better than of old. It is more intelligent, more learned, more cultured, more pleasing, and, in so far as it is sincere, earnest, and inspired from on High, it ought to be more successful. In the very earlier periods of Methodism the preachers were drawn from the humbler walks of life. Like the fishermen who followed and became the Disciples of the Saviour, they were for the most part unlearned, unlettered, and without culture, and they preached Christ and Him crucified from the depths of the heart, using such language, tropes, and



Rev. John P. Durbin.

figures as were natural to them, or with which they might have been inspired; but as Methodism became more "respectable," more opulent and less "a badge of reproach," a new style of men came into the vineyard to work. This was altogether natural and desirable, and to-day the means provided by the Church for the education of its ministers, and for fitting them for the important work in which they are to engage, are such as to challenge the admiration of all the people. We recall to memory one of the most distinguished of this "new generation" of preachers.

REV. JOHN P. DURBIN

was born during the first year of the present century, in Bourbon County, Kentucky. He was the son of pious parents, and was converted when he was about eighteen years of age. His education up to this period was necessarily limited, but he entered the ministry very shortly after his conversion, and at once commenced a course of hard study. He was licensed to preach before he was of age, and, filling his saddle-bags with books, he took the field, reading as he travelled, on horseback by day, and by the light afforded from the burning of pine knots in the cabins of the West where he would rest for the night, and afterward attending lectures at the Miami University and other colleges he fitted himself for the splendid career which marked his after-life.

We shall never forget our first impressions of Mr. Durbin. We were a lad of sixteen years of age when we first had the pleasure to hear him preach. It was

at Ebenezer church, on Christian Street. The fame of the distinguished orator had already been wide-spread athwart the land, and immense numbers crowded into the houses wherever and whenever it was announced he would preach. We made our start for the church at the usual hour, supposing we would be in ample time, and so we were for the service, but reaching the church we found it packed in every part, and, wedging our way through the mass of humanity, we finally succeeded in obtaining standing room in the south gallery, with the front wall of the building as a support to our back. The house, although thus full, was quiet almost as the grave. Directly the preacher rose from his seat in the pulpit and stepped forward to the reading-desk, and taking up the hymn-book, he announced the page on which the selection would be found, and pausing for a few moments, until the rustling of the leaves would cease, he proceeded to read the hymn, and as the utterances came forth we felt "that is not he." We scanned the pulpit, looking for another preacher who might be Mr. Durbin, but the reader of the hymn was its sole occupant. We were disappointed, and ventured to ask our neighbor "Is that Mr. Durbin?" and receiving an affirmative answer we were more than disappointed, and involuntarily propounded to ourself the query, "Why do such crowds run after such a man?"

APPEARANCES DECEPTIVE.

There was nothing about the preacher to impress one favorably. We could distinguish nothing in either the

form, face, or manner of the man on whom that large assemblage was intently gazing that seemed to indicate genius or superior ability. To us he looked like the traditional North Carolinian, an indolent, careless, and rather unkempt individual. His face seemed a saffron color, and his hair, which was thin, was of a yellowish hue, and the cadences of his voice as he lined the hymn for the congregation struck our ear as an unpleasant drawling sound, for, having been greatly disappointed from the first, we probably became somewhat hypercritical. There seemed no fire in the eye nor animation in the face.

The singing of the hymn is ended, and the tall form of the gentleman in "the altar," who led the congregation, settles down to a kneeling posture. We had no place to kneel, and were hence obliged to maintain our position, looking at the preacher as he put forth his petition to the Throne of Grace, and directly the voice that we had not thought as much as endurable became more mellow, more pathetic, more sonorous, and so earnest in its pleading that it grew to a richness of surpassing beauty, and the impression that had so troubled us vanished ere the supplication of the great preacher had come to an end, and we were in a fair condition to listen to the sermon, the eloquence and power of which produced such a transition of opinion and feeling as brought to mind the experience of an old German frau, who was a member of this same Ebenezer in its early days.

The old lady was a stickler for Mr. Wesley's injunc-

tion concerning plainness of dress, and practised it in her own person. On a certain occasion there was assigned to St. George's charge, with others, a preacher who was somewhat dressy. It might have been, for aught we know, Brother William Cooper, who would sometimes appear in the pulpit in white drill pants, and who, we are glad to know, still lives, at an age of more than threescore years and ten, to witness the magnificence of the structure which he assisted to rear. But our German friend was not slow to criticise the attire of the new preacher, from whose ministry she thought but little good was likely to result. It came his turn again, however, to fill the pulpit at Ebenezer, and he was probably feeling in just the mood to acquit himself well; and it was not long after he had taken his text before he got away into the glories of his subject, and showering the rhetoric of the Gospel and its promises over his audience like meteors of gold and silver hue, the old-fashioned "shout," so seldom heard in the city churches of the present day, rang out from different parts of the house, and the old lady, catching the infection, shouted too, exclaiming: "Oh, dere is nutting in dress—dere is nutting in dress;" and so thought we, after we had heard Mr. Durbin; there is nothing in appearances, albeit an experience of half a century since has made us believe that the world, or most of the people in it, think otherwise.

DURBIN'S STRANGE POWER AS A PREACHER.

There was something very remarkable—we had almost said marvellous—about Dr. Durbin's preaching. He was a natural born orator, a production of which Methodism has been most prolific. He was a hard student, and, having acquired the ancient languages of the world, he drew upon the classic lore that was thus opened to him with such a prodigal hand as enabled him to reach the topmost height of pulpit eloquence and power; but there seemed, apart from the advantage thus acquired, a magnetic influence about his ministry, and especially his preaching, that reminded one constantly of Kentucky's other great orator and statesman —Henry Clay. There was, of course, no similarity of appearance or of style. The manner and style of the two men were directly opposite, and yet each possessed the same wonderful power over the minds of vast multitudes of men and women. There was no effort at display about Mr. Durbin; no reaching for applause; but there was such an influence about his preaching that made it seem like a direct inspiration from on High. As Bishop Simpson has said of him, "he held his audience by a strange spell." The congregation became enchained as though led on by a charmed mystery, nor could you realize what drew you on. You didn't see the speaker half so much as you heard him, and this was the mysterious circumstance that those who followed him could not understand. The same magnetic power that rendered him popular as a preacher

made him exceptionally successful as an educator. A task was easy if 'twere to be learned through him; and so was the preaching of the Word rendered delightful if expounded by Durbin.

In later years we heard Mr. Durbin at St. George's. The house was, as usual, packed. The text was from 2 Peter, iii. 10: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

He proceeded to show how the world would be destroyed by fire. He pictured, with a word painting that was wonderful, the flashing of electricity and the rolling of thunder greater than ten thousand parks of artillery; and, describing the composition of the planet on which we live, and its natural tendency to such a destruction, he explained the existence of the consuming element—in the air, in the mines of the earth, and in the waters of the great deep; and then grasping, as it were, the sun, he pictured it as a mass of fire coming in contact with the earth, until the vast audience, leaning forward in their seats, seemed transfixed in a blaze of fire, as it hung breathlessly on his words. Nor was it anything like the ordinary kind of "hell-fire" sermon that is often heard. There was no ranting, no threatening, no effort to terrorize by exhibiting the damned writhing in a lake of liquid fire, but an awe-inspiring description of Almighty power and a magnificent portraiture of the elements of the universe. The eyes of

the speaker, which we had once thought so dull, sparkled with a strange light. The form which before was unattractive loomed up like a superior presence as it moved quietly from one side to the other of the reading-desk, and the voice, not before musical, was simply captivating.

Mr. Durbin filled various important positions connected with the church. He was for several years President of Dickinson College, in which position his skill and general ability as an educator was highly appreciated. He was at one time editor of the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, and for some years Missionary Secretary. He was also during the session of 1831–32 Chaplain to the Senate of the United States. His life was an earnest and a busy one. He travelled some two years in Europe, and his observations in the East, published many years ago, produced a profound impression, and dying in the seventy-sixth year of his age, his spirit winged its way to

> "A grand immortal sphere
> Beyond this realm of broken ties,"

leaving the name of Durbin inscribed upon the tablet of Methodist history as one of its most cherished souvenirs.

CHAPTER XIII.

Origin of Salem Church—An Eccentric and Popular Preacher.

A PECULIAR feature about the growth of old Philadelphia was that in several localities there grew up what we may term frontier settlements, detached and apart from what was understood as "the city." Two of these neighborhoods have been referred to in the course of these sketches, namely, Camptown and Kensington, which at a very early period ran into one. If the reader will pass through the neighborhood of Thirteenth and Locust and Spruce, and, indeed, down to Pine, he will find here and there, isolated, as it were, from the rest of the surrounding buildings, an old one that represents a long-passed period, probably a hundred years ago, when a range of open lots or fields of grass intervened between them and "the built-up" portion of the city. In the northwest, say about Thirteenth and Vine and to Callowhill, there are yet to be found like evidences of an old settlement overlooking "Bush Hill," as it was when the barbarous spectacle of a man hung by the neck was wont to be there exhibited to gaping thousands of curious people, whose morbid sensibilities led them to witness the violent killing of a human being according to law.* Farther

* The locality known as "Bush Hill," which is now entirely covered with buildings, was a stretch of high ground beginning

west, but again south, on the north side of Spruce Street, between what in old times was known as Schuylkill Fourth and Schuylkill Fifth Streets, was another such outlying village, composed of frame buildings, and known only as "Goose Town." The inhabitants of this settlement were generally brickmakers and teamsters who worked about the brickyards which lay around the west end of the old city plot, and there were until within the last thirty years fields of grass intervening between this locality and Broad Street.

We mention these facts because each of these frontier settlements formed the nucleus for a Methodist society and church edifice. Salem, Nazareth, and what was originally known as the "Brickmakers' church," now the Western, all owe their establishment to missionary effort in the isolated neighborhoods here named, although in the case of the latter there were other populations to draw from that had been gathered by the coal trade on the Schuylkill, and the manufacturing interests in the southwestern portion of the old two-mile square city.

Near to Thirteenth and Pine Streets was one of the small thoroughfares with which the city abounded in the olden time, called Salem Alley, on the one side of which there was an old shop building that had probably been used for a smithy and wheelwright shop. At about the year 1810 the brethren of St. George's carried the Home Missionary enterprise of that society into this

at about Seventeenth and Callowhill Streets, and extending north and west to the river Schuylkill.

locality, and begun the holding of prayer-meetings in the shop on Salem Alley, and meeting with success they very soon established it as a preaching station, and organized a society to which the name of

SALEM CHURCH

was given. Among the colporteurs who were sent out from the old mother church, and began operations in the alley, was Thomas Hughes, who at once, on the formation of the new society, severed his connection with St. George's, and was, we think, the leader of the first class at Salem; and his nephew, Mr. Thomas Neely, who has given a son to the ministry, is among the oldest members of the present society. The congregation worshipped in the old shop for several years. They were generally a poor people, for the most part Irish, and, being possessed of not very much of this world's goods, they stayed in the alley much longer, perhaps, than they otherwise would have done; but in the year 1819 they determined not only to better their own condition, but to put forth new and greater efforts for the spread of the Gospel and the conversion of souls throughout that neighborhood; and having purchased a lot on the east side of Thirteenth Street, below Spruce, they proceeded to erect a church building which should be in their judgment commensurate to the increasing population of that part of the city and its needs; and before the close of that year they succeeded in erecting a neat brick building, which was in style and appearance according to the then existing order of Methodist

church architecture. The building was not to say a very large one, but it was ample for the purposes of the society, and the entrance to it was reached by ascending high wooden steps. But these steps, according to a current incident of the olden time, were not always available for the purpose designed. All Methodists of thirty years ago will remember something of John Newland Maffit, "the sky-rocket preacher," as he was frequently termed, who for a few years drew immense crowds to listen to his intensely dramatic style of preaching. He was sought after by all the churches, and on one occasion he was announced to preach in "Old Salem," and, as was to be expected, the house was packed to its utmost capacity—so much so, indeed, according to the account, that access from the front door to the pulpit was perfectly impossible; and when the great preacher, who, by the way, always delayed his appearance until the house had been filled, arrived, he could not be got through the mass of people that blocked the aisles, and he was taken around to the rear end of the building and passed through the window that was behind the pulpit.

The Salem people worshipped in the old house on Thirteenth Street for more than twenty years, during which it was to very many souls the gate of heaven. In 1841, the congregation still increasing, ground was purchased on the north side of Lombard Street, west of Thirteenth, on which to erect a new and more spacious building, and within that year the "new Salem" church was finished. Mr. Maffit was the officiating

minister at the dedication of the new church edifice, and we are glad to know that the society is now in a healthy and flourishing condition. The old building on Thirteenth Street was allowed to stand for many years after the removal, being used for different purposes, but it was finally sold to the Presbyterians, and, after being occupied by them for a few years, it was made to give place to a new and more ornate structure, which is now known as the Union Presbyterian church.

Among the most popular preachers at Salem was

REV. WILLIAM BARNS,

who was very extensively and familiarly spoken of by Methodists of the olden time as "Billy Barns," and who was the first regularly-stationed preacher at that church after the severance of "St. George's charge" in 1835. He had, however, alternated there with others when at the same charge in 1825. There were several reasons, doubtless, for the great regard in which Mr. Barns was always held by that congregation, a prominent one being his kindred nationality with a very large portion of the membership, but his preaching was of a style that would necessarily be attractive to that people. Like Durbin, to whom we referred in our last chapter, although altogether dissimilar in many respects, Mr. Barns was an extraordinary man. Born in Ireland, of parents in very moderate circumstances, he was without much education, and was, before leaving the "seagirt isle," apprenticed to learn the trade of an ornamental painter, to which pursuit the poetry

Rev. William Barns.

of his mind, as developed in after-years, probably directed him. Arriving in Baltimore in 1811, he followed that business for some time in that city, being engaged in painting a sign when the presiding elder called upon him, saying there was other and more important work for him to do. He was converted in August, 1812, and joined the society in the following year. He began to preach on a circuit with the presiding elder in 1816, and was received as a member of the Baltimore Conference the following year, 1817, and continued in the work until his death, which occurred in November, 1865. His ministry was prolonged through a period of forty-eight years.

As a pulpit orator, Mr. Barns was not only exceptional, but unique, and will be best described, perhaps, by the designation of an aggressive preacher. His style and conduct was earnest and vehement, and he was wont to attack the strongholds of the enemy—to employ one of his own tropes—with "banners flying and drums a-beating." Like all other men of limited education who rise to distinction, he was a hard student, and thus had rendered himself particularly strong as an exponent or expounder of the "doctrines" of the Bible. His mind was of a metaphysical order, and he delighted in the elaboration of abstruse questions of theology, psychology, etc., and was a most ready controversialist. His power of language was simply immense, so great as to frequently border on the extravagant. He retained during his whole life so much of

THE IRISH BROGUE,

which made his preaching peculiarly characteristic, a circumstance, however, to which an affection of the throat or nasal organ, with which he was always more or less afflicted, might have in some degree contributed. He was accustomed to become not only greatly in earnest, but much excited when preaching, and his tropes and figures on such occasions would carry the hearer from world's end to world's end again, and to the most lofty heights of imaginative power. We have seen and heard him in such flights of rhetoric, when he would rush wildly away to the "highest dome of God's celestial temple in the skies," and, portraying the reward that is reserved for the righteous, he would fly to "the blue vault of heaven, where we shall pluck the stars as flowers from a garden, and, dressed in garments of dazzling light, we shall drink from cups of gold, circled with diamonds and rubies, from the pure and everlasting springs that circle and flow around and over Jehovah's starry throne;" and coming down from such giddy heights he would launch the thunders of the law against "the Pope and the devil, and all the fiends of hell," with such terrific volume as would startle the most irrepressible man or woman in the congregation. Mr. Barns had from some cause lost his hair, and from the time we first knew him he wore a wig, and such an one as we always thought greatly disproportioned to the head, albeit that was ample enough to contain the large brain of which he must have been

possessed, and when preaching under such excitement the top covering would shake like an aspen leaf. These flights of rhetoric must have been not only heard but seen to be appreciated. The peculiar dialect and the highly-impressive gesticulation of the speaker are wanting in every attempt at description, for which the most graphic word-painting is inadequate.

Brother Barns, with all his strength of character, was eccentric, and there were, during his long ministerial career, many amusing anecdotes concerning him current. Mrs. Barns used to say that if she could catch his eye when thus intensely excited in preaching, she was able to recall and restrain him, possibly through something bordering on magnetic influence. On one occasion, as we have heard narrated, while stationed at Union church, Wilmington, he became greatly excited with his subject, and noticing Mrs. Barns' efforts in that regard, he exclaimed: "Oh! you may look, and you may look, Mrs. Barns, but the tri-colored flag of Methodism, the Bible, the Hymn-Book, and the Discipline, shall be carried to the front in triumph if it costs William Barns his life." Another instance of such fervid eccentricity is said to have occurred at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. He was accustomed to urge plainness of dress and to denounce the frivolities of fashionable life and attire as indulged in by many Methodists. Some of the brethren, and more likely the sisters, had discussed the subject, and in doing so retaliated on the preacher on account of his wig, which was, by the critics, styled an unnecessary appendage of dress. These

criticisms reached Mr. Barns, and, preaching one day one of his fiery sermons, he raised his hand over his head, exclaiming, "Here is William Barns with his wig," and, suiting the action to the word, and grasping the wisp of hair and holding it aloft, he continued, "And here is William Barns without his wig. How do you like him best?" The effect of such a dramatic scene was not only electric but to some extent ludicrous, the audience for a few minutes giving way to what approximated to boisterous laughter.*

AS A LOYALIST

to the government of his adopted country and to the Methodist Church, Mr. Barns was profound, but he urged the cultivation of charity and courteous conduct toward all other denominations. His hostility to the Romish Church, however, was boundless. Some of his poetic effusions that we have seen, some in manuscript and others in print, although not attaining to the highest standard of the muse, burn and blaze with patriotic ardor. His poetry was like the rough, unhewn rock from the mountain base, but it partook of the practically energetic strength of mind which made him a power in God's ministerial army. Opinions have varied as to

* We might relate many other anecdotes that were current during the life of Mr. Barns as illustrating his eccentricity. Old-time Methodists will readily recall them, while those narrated above will serve to give the younger reader an idea, if not an appreciation, of one of the most original and indeed unique preachers that it has been our pleasure to meet.

the merits of Barns as a pulpit orator, for he was more or less during life himself a subject of discussion and criticism, but his power and success as a preacher of the Gospel was universally conceded. We have mentioned him as a controversialist, and as such he at times agitated the entire Methodist community where he would be stationed. In 1825 he was one of the several preachers located at "St. George's charge," officiating alternately at that church, Ebenezer, Salem, and Nazareth. One of his colleagues in the charge was Rev. Charles Pitman, who was in his time also one of the most distinguished of the Methodist ministers, and an entirely different sort of man from Barns, and during that year there grew up what was extensively known among Methodists as

THE PITMAN-BARNS CONTROVERSY.

As before remarked, the latter was a close metaphysical student, and his discussions of doctrine were at times such as to rather astonish the old-time Methodists. We remember very well the excitement in the different congregations resulting from the preaching of these two gentlemen, who asserted and maintained different positions concerning doctrinal points. When it was ascertained from "the plan" that Barns would preach at either of the churches named, the house would be crowded, and so on any other occasion when Pitman was to fill the pulpit, albeit the attendance might be sparse enough at other times. The point first in controversy was the subject of sanctification, but, as is ever the case, the field of discussion took a much wider range

subsequently, and eventuated in the preferment to the Conference of a charge of heterodoxy against Barns by Mr. Pitman and a local preacher whose name has escaped us. The charge was patiently heard by the Conference, Bishop George, as we recollect, presiding, and each of the parties defended his position with marked ability. The bishop was greatly interested in the discussion of the subject. The contestants were, perhaps, two of as strong men theologically as there were at the time in the American connection, and it was manifest that the bishop was deeply impressed by the close reasoning and the somewhat ponderous, logical presentation of Mr. Barns. The result of the hearing before the Conference was a verdict of "not proven," and the charges were dismissed. At a subsequent period, very shortly after this examination doubtless, the three gentlemen—the Bishop, Pitman, and Barns—were present at a camp-meeting in New Jersey, to which the former had been specially invited. Barns preached there one of his most logical and impressive sermons, and after the conclusion of it Bishop George, laying his hand impressively on the shoulder of Mr. Pitman, said, "Let that man alone."

Barns taught the doctrine of entire sanctification in this life. "Surely," said he, "there is nothing in instantaneous sanctification to stagger our faith or confound our reason; for if Satan had power, through the sin of our first parents, to instantaneously efface from their souls the image of God, that consisted in righteousness and true holiness, we might, therefore, easily believe that,

according to the Gospel scheme of salvation in Christ Jesus, Omnipotence could instantaneously restore that image and enable us to triumph over all moral evil." "Sanctification," said he, in another sermon, "implies to be saved from sin and to be purified. . . . And as sanctification is a Divine work, Jehovah can as effectually purify the whole soul in a moment as he could effect a partial sanctification or accomplish the work by slow degrees."

But it was not upon this proposition alone, as we remember or understand, that Mr. Pitman's formal charges of heterodoxy were preferred. They embraced also the subjects of the Godhead and the Sonship of Christ. Barns, who, by the way, preached the same doctrine during the whole of his ministry, taught that Christ suffered as a man and not as a God, and it was upon this point that the prosecutors sought to make good the charge of heresy, but we would depart from the purpose of this work were we to follow this subject further. Mr. Barns was greatly beloved by immense numbers of the Methodist people. He was a most laborious and unceasing worker for his Master; was proud of his high calling, and his faith was such as would, if possible, remove mountains and dam the ocean's flood. He died with the harness on his shoulders, having preached at Bristol, where he was stationed, the day before he was taken ill, and breathed his last at the home of Hon. James W. Quiggle, on Walnut Street, Philadelphia, to which he was taken when stricken with illness on the street.

CHAPTER XIV.

Origin of Nazareth—Rev. Solomon Higgins.

Rev. Mr. Carson, in his address delivered at the seventy-seventh anniversary of Union Church, said, "We are not to imagine that the people of the olden time were all saints," and in support of the remark he added, "The records, which I have perused with much care, prove the contrary, for opposite many names there are remarks written which show that there were queer people in the church of that day, as at present." And to illustrate the fact, he tells us that opposite to the name of one dissatisfied brother there is a declaration that he had "moved to St. George's with certificate because the prayer-meeting on Saturday night would not be discontinued." It has ever been thus, that there are discontented people in all societies and all relations of life; and it requires no stretch of the imagination to apply the fact to any or all the churches.

In the early part of the present century there was an old circuit-preacher, who will still be remembered by old Methodists, and who was familiarly known as

FATHER GRUBER.

He began to preach in the year 1800, and for the greater part of fifty years was a circuit-rider. In 1828 he was

at St. George's, and in 1829 was on Gloucester, New Jersey, circuit. He was a quaint, bluff, old-fashioned preacher, of whom there are a good many anecdotes extant. While he was on the Cumberland, New Jersey, circuit, a certain Mr. English, who was a member of the church, applied for license to preach, and, after examining into the subject, Mr. Gruber concluded that, whether or not the aspirant for clerical occupation had grace, he at least had not "gifts," and so the application was refused. Mr. English was much dissatisfied, and, indeed, indignant that his talents should have been thus underestimated, and accordingly supplemented his first application by another, in which he stated that for fifteen years he had been dissatisfied with the church, its government, etc., and therefore demanded a certificate of leave. After preaching, Mr. Gruber met the class, and after its close introduced Mr. English's matter. "Here," said he, "brethren and sisters, is John English, who has been for fifteen years dissatisfied with the Methodist Episcopal Church; all you who are opposed to his withdrawing rise up." Everybody sat still, and, turning to the discontented English, he said, "*There, you're out.*" Mr. English said, "I would like my certificate." To which the preacher replied, "I will call and leave it to-morrow." The following day Mr. Gruber rode up to the house of Mr. English, and, being invited to dismount, replied, "The King's business requires haste; here is your certificate;" and rode away. Mr. English opened the paper and read as follows:

"This certifies that the bearer, John English, has been for fifteen years a dissatisfied member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and has withdrawn therefrom on the —— day of ——, 1832.

"J. GRUBER, Preacher in Charge."

Mr. English left the connection, and joined the Methodist Protestant Church, and sought to become a preacher of that denomination, but he was there too estimated according to his want of ability, and finally returned to the parent church, within whose bosom he died.

Mr. Gruber did not suit the people at St. George's, nor, as we are compelled to believe, at either of the other churches in the "charge," for the bishops were asked to send him away, which they did, very much to his chagrin. On a Sabbath day, during the session of the next year's Conference, he was appointed to preach in the old mother church, and he paid his respects to the friends who had asked for his removal by asserting in his sermon that "there are some people who are so proud and ambitious that unless they can be, like the first king of Israel, from the shoulders up, higher than everybody else they wouldn't come into the house at all, but hang about the door."

THE GERM OF A NEW CHURCH.

It has already been mentioned in these chapters that the construction of what was at the time known as St. Thomas's church, on Tenth Street, below Market, by some of the old Academy members, gave rise to some

hostile feeling in the congregation, and that, with a view to obstruct the success of the enterprise, some of the Academy members commenced the holding of prayer-meetings in the neighborhood of Thirteenth and Vine Streets, at and during the hours of service at the new St. Thomas's church; and, while there was no formal secession, it would seem that the movement was simply a repetition of history. These prayer-meetings were begun some time during the year 1814. They were held at the house of a Mr. Summers, on the west side of Thirteenth Street, between Race and Vine. It was not at all an uncommon thing to hold prayer-meetings at private houses in those days, and in the suburbs especially this was a frequent occurrence, without any reference to the formation of a new society. The meetings at Summers' house were continued for some months, when that gentleman, who owned the property running through to Perry Street, proffered the use of its rear end to the brethren free of charge for ten years, provided they would put a building on it to be used for public worship. The offer was promptly accepted and a society was formed, and at once the members set to work to improve the lot, and in a short time they had succeeded in erecting a plain, single-storied frame meeting-house, fronting on Perry Street. Here the new society continued to worship and hold their class and prayer-meetings until about the year 1827, the preachers for the infant congregation being supplied by St. George's charge. In 1827, the ten years' free lease being about to expire, the society purchased a lot on the west side

of Thirteenth Street, a short distance below Vine, and erected thereon a brick building, which was entitled

NAZARETH.

It was a very plain structure, the old Methodist style of architecture being rigidly observed.

"No sumptuous chimney-piece of shining stone"

invited the stranger's gaze or challenged admiration for the newly-constructed temple, and yet the members of the society were, as they had a right to be, proud of their achievement. The ceremonial service connected with the laying of the corner-stone was conducted by Rev. Samuel Mervine, and to Rev. William Roberts, one of the St. George's preachers, the society was greatly indebted for efficient service in the enterprise.

The new society grew with the increasing population of the city, and it was not very long before the members realized the fact that they had miscalculated their needs. The church was too small, and in 1835, or shortly previous thereto, it was determined to enlarge or rebuild it, and during that year the work was begun and completed. Twenty feet east and west were added to the building, and the roof and walls were raised, so that a basement was arranged for class and Sunday-school rooms. The dedication sermon at what was for a time termed "New Nazareth" was preached by Rev. Charles Pitman, and the first stationed preacher after the dissolution of St. George's charge was the Rev. Mr. Roberts, whose services were so valuable to the society in 1827. This

society has doubtless suffered some loss from removals north and west; but the neighborhood is still densely populated, and ought to afford Methodist people enough to fill such a church edifice to overflowing. A few, and very few, of the Old Guard, who were wont to wake the echoes in the old building with songs of praise of forty years ago, are still left, notably among whom we observe Mr. John W. Huff, who for very many years led the congregation in singing, and whose faith in the saving power of the Redeemer, at the age of fourscore years, is undiminished.

One of the oldest preachers in the Philadelphia Conference, and who was a connecting link of two generations of Methodists, was

REV. SOLOMON HIGGINS,

whom we were accustomed in early life to esteem as one of the most earnest, painstaking, and devoted of God's messengers. Mr. Higgins came into the work from a State that has contributed a liberal quota to the ministerial corps of early Methodism. He was born in Talbot County, Maryland, in 1792, shortly after the death of Mr. Wesley, and spent the early part of his life on the Eastern Shore; and at the age of about twenty-two years—say in 1814—he became a preacher of the Gospel. We must repeat as to Mr. Higgins what is traditionally true of a large majority of the first preachers of Methodism, namely, that his education was limited to the somewhat meagre teaching of the country schools as they existed at the closing periods

of the eighteenth century. He was, however, a man of superior mind, which was so improved by self-culture as to have given him a prominent position in the ministry. Intellectually, he was much above the usual standard of the preachers of his time. His whole life was marked by great industry, but as a student of theology he was successful in a marked degree. With a delicate physical organization, his mind was robust and capable of great endurance, and he illustrated through a long life the capacity of the frailest of vases to contain the most valuable of precious stones. Mr. Higgins was a gentleman of the old school, and by his evenness of temper and urbanity of manner towards all with whom he was in any way associated rendered himself not only a most pleasant companion, but a much-cherished friend. He was one of those modest and unobtrusive sort of men that one likes to meet in the whirl of this busy and, alas! too reckless life, but of pronounced views and opinions, which he was ever ready to maintain by argument and such proofs as were necessary to their elucidation and support. As a business man he was exceptional among preachers; methodical and systematic, level-headed in reference to the affairs of the world, and highly practical in the performance of such duties as are requisite to promote the success of the temporal elements of church economy.

As a preacher Mr. Higgins was sound, logical, precise, and convincing. He never ranted in the pulpit, but dignified it by his presence and the grace of his manner; he lacked nothing, however, of the power

that is derivable from the fervid sources of the imagination or the inspiration of heart feeling. His sermons were generally analytical and argumentative, but we should not class him as "a pulpit orator" in the popular sense of that term, for he developed no ambition to excel as such, and he was free from the ridiculous *mannerisms* that are contracted by many preachers. Old Mr. Gruber, already mentioned as somewhat of a character, was much annoyed by such exhibitions, and the practice into which many men fall of terminating each sentence with an "ah" moved him to absolute contempt. An aspiring young preacher, who was in the habit of thus supplementing his discourses, once wrote to the old gentleman for some advice, and Gruber, thinking the opportunity a good one, seized upon it to administer a rebuke in the most practical way possible, and thus answered the ambitious young gentleman :

"Dear—ah Brother—ah. When—ah you—ah go—ah to preach—ah take care—ah you don't—ah say—ah, ah, ah.

"Yours—ah,

"JACOB—ah GRUBER—ah."

Ridiculous as this missive was, it is said to have had the desired effect, and to have worked a positive cure.

Early in life the health of Mr. Higgins failed to such an extent as obliged him to relinquish circuit work, and accepting a position in a business house in Philadelphia, he performed duty meanwhile as a local

preacher, until the year 1821, when he resumed his relation to the Conference, after which, for several years, he travelled Milford, Talbot, Dover, and Smyrna circuits, and in 1827–28 he was stationed at Asbury Church, Wilmington. In 1829–30 he was stationed at Union, in this city, and having afterward filled appointments at Trenton and Newark, New Jersey, he was again returned to the Philadelphia Conference, and in 1835–36 was stationed at Ebenezer. From this time to the close of 1841 he was presiding elder of the South and North Philadelphia districts, and his effective ministry ended with the close of the year 1846, at St. John's in this city, after which he took a supernumerary relation, filling various responsible positions in connection with the church.

It was during the pastorate of Mr. Higgins at Union Church that a movement was begun and crystallized by some of the members of that society for the establishment of

THE FIRST METHODIST CHURCH IN WEST PHILADELPHIA,

to which the name of Asbury was given. It is gratifying to note the fact that, at least, so much has been done to perpetuate the name and keep green among Philadelphia Methodists the memory of that good old pioneer of the Wesleyan movement. It is a name that must live while Methodism survives, and yet here flows

"The swallowing gulf of dark oblivion."

What shores are not washed by its tide? What treas-

ures of earth are not carried away on its relentless bosom? And how many names of truly great men are not submerged by its endless encroachments? Asbury should have at the hands of American Methodists such a monument of enduring grandeur as would challenge the admiration of the world.

We have known Methodist ministers who have taken a superannuated relation, as did Mr. Higgins in 1864, that have become complainingly unhappy during the remainder of life, apparently regretful that they had spent their best years in the service of God. Mr. Higgins was not of this cast or class of men, but, on the contrary, it was during his superannuary relation to the Conference that he took charge of the much-crippled affairs of the Philadelphia Methodist Book Concern, and by his skill, industry, and superior business ability rescued it from impending bankruptcy and placed it on a firm and solid basis as a successful and profitable business enterprise. Although of a frail constitution, Mr. Higgins lived to the seventy-sixth year of his age, closing a busy and useful life on the 12th of February, 1867. Everybody who knew Solomon Higgins held him in high respect, and his colleagues in the ministry loved him. Of him we may truthfully say, as did Tickell of Addison:

> "He taught us how to live, and oh! too high
> The price of knowledge, taught us how to die."

CHAPTER XV.

A Controversy out of which grew a New Church.

As we glance over the field of local Methodism we find it steadily pushing its way westward with the growth of the city and the increase of population, and filling up the gaps that intervened in the somewhat irregular progress of what has already grown to be a great metropolis. As hitherto noticed, St. John's, which was located east of Second Street and near the Cohocksink Creek, in 1816, changed its location in 1850 to Third Street near Beaver, but it was many years previous to that date, say in 1831 or 1832, that a number of the members of that congregation organized a new society, and purchased a church building which had been constructed by the Presbyterians on the west side of Fifth Street near Green. Fifth Street Methodist Episcopal Church first appears on the Conference records as a station in 1832, with Rev. Joseph Rusling as the pastor in charge.

A NEW AND TROUBLESOME CONTROVERSY.

It was at about this period, when the Asiatic cholera was devastating many portions of the Old World, and making rapid strides in its progress to the New, that a very important matter in church economy agitated

the Methodist congregations of our city and for a time caused much serious apprehension as to the effect it might have in retarding the progress of the work. The Church polity, as framed and established by Mr. Wesley, provided for two subordinate administrative bodies in a society, namely, trustees and stewards. When the Church was organized in this country this provision was incorporated in the Discipline, but it had never been observed in the case of St. George's charge, where the entire administrative and executive power had up to this period been exercised by a board of trustees. The power and duty of the two boards as defined in the Discipline were quite distinct. The trustees were to have charge of the church property and manage its finances, while the stewards were to "receive and keep account of the money or other provision collected for the support of the preachers, and apply it as directed by the Discipline, and make accurate return of any expenditure of money, whether to the preachers, the sick, or the poor, and to see the needy and distressed in order to relieve and comfort them." The stewards were made accountable to the Quarterly Conference, which has the power to dismiss or change them, and it was provided also that there shall be "not less than three nor more than four to each circuit or station." These provisions are in marked accordance with the very first attempt at organization as made by Mr. Wesley, as was seen in an early chapter of these sketches, it being the peculiar province of the stewards to see that the preachers were properly cared for.

In the year 1831 the four preachers at St. George's were George G. Cookman, who went down in the ill-fated steamer President, Francis Hodgson, William Cooper, and Levi Stork, with Manning Force as presiding elder of the district. In 1832, Mr. Force still continued in the relation of elder, with the same preachers at St. George's, except that Jefferson Lewis had taken the place of Mr. Stork. Mr. Cookman, and probably his colleagues also, had frequently complained that they were not adequately provided for by the trustees, and finding that matters did not improve, Mr. Cookman, who was the preacher in charge, at a quarterly meeting held either in 1831 or 1832, after the business of the Conference had been about concluded, arose in his place, and said, "Mr. Presiding Elder, I now nominate for stewards, to be confirmed by this Conference, the following brethren:" at the same time announcing the names. The effect of this movement in the Conference was much like a peal of thunder at noonday. More than sixty years had been rolled away into eternity since the foundation of old mother St. George's, and "we never had stewards before, why should we have them now?" Brother Force was, perhaps, not surprised at the proposition, because he had, doubtless, been consulted, but the preachers, itinerant and local, and "the official members" who assist in constituting a Quarterly Conference, were taken all aback, and the trustees, from whose hands this movement would wrest much of their power, were not only amazed, but indignant, and

accordingly they resisted the proposition. "But," said Mr. Cookman, "here is the law:"

THE ORGANIC LAW OF THE CHURCH.

"It is so written in the Discipline, that every society shall have not less than three nor more than four stewards;" beside which, said the preacher in charge, it is so incorporated in the charter of this particular society, and he gave good and sound reasons why the long-lapsed law should be vitalized and put into effective operation. The presiding elder had nothing to do, of course, but receive the nominations and present them for confirmation, but the Conference was too much surprised and agitated to act upon them at that particular meeting, and, as may be well supposed, the subject at once became one of controversy in all the congregations connected with the charge.

The members of the several societies divided into two parties, one in favor of the trustees, and the other of the stewards, and, as the discussion of the subject was enlarged, much unpleasant and, indeed, bitter feeling was evolved. It is extremely difficult to understand, after a lapse of nearly fifty years, even by those who are old enough to remember the circumstances, why such a question should have produced a controversy. Power and authority, however, is sweet to the human mind. It is intoxicating, and ever cumulative in its purposes; the gentler elements of our nature become ossified by its rankling growth.

In the congregations at St. George's and Ebenezer the

trustees' party was especially strong, and at the latter the aspect of affairs was beginning to assume a seriously-threatening character. The stewards, however, had taken their places and assumed the duties of the office, whether confirmed or not, being resisted, meanwhile, by the trustees in various ways.

THE BISHOPS INTERPOSE.

It will be readily imagined that such a controversy would quite naturally give rise to other questions of difference, just as the noxious weeds follow unbidden the labors of the husbandman, and finally the bishops became alarmed at the outlook, lest the cause of true religion might be not only compromised but seriously damaged, and Bishop Emory—who, by the way, was a most superior executive officer—interposed his influence and authority, and, getting together some of the principal combatants, he proposed that the question in controversy should be submitted to counsel for a legal opinion. While the law of the Church on the subject was so plain that a "wayfaring man" ought to have understood it, passion had so blinded the reasoning faculties of the contestants that they could not agree as to the validity of a non-used provision, and so the bishop suggested the preparation of what the lawyers term "a case stated," and a submission of it to three of the most learned and distinguished legal gentlemen of the city, and this was finally agreed to. The submission, which provided that the disputants on either side would abide by the decision of the gentlemen named, was drawn by

the bishop. He commenced by reciting that whereas the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church provides thus and so, and then proceeded to state the differences that had arisen among the members, and reciting a desire that the questions in controversy should be settled according to legal principles, the parties agreed that the matter should be submitted to Messrs. Charles Chauncey, Horace Binney, and John Sergeant for an opinion and decision, which should be binding upon all the parties and constitute a settlement of the controversy.

THE LAWYERS SETTLE THE QUESTION.

It could not, we presume, have required much research or length of time to enable these eminent members of a bar which was, in those days, an honor to the city, to come to a conclusion, for, being altogether disinterested and entirely unaffected by the feeling that had grown up in the Church, there was nothing for them to consider but the naked legal question, and, as a consequence, they very shortly rendered their decision that, according to the laws of the Church, it was the duty of the society to choose a board of stewards who should perform such functions as are provided in the Discipline, and thus was the trustees' party saved from the consequences of their ill-advised and too reckless proceedings.

But it does not always follow that the ending of a controversy results in such settlement of the questions that were in issue as is productive of absolute peace

and harmony. The storms by which nature is at times convulsed always come to an end, and the passing away of the clouds, that were erst so freighted with danger and destruction, is followed by a beautiful and, indeed, refreshing calm, but all around are seen the evidences of the strife in which the elements were engaged. Prostrate buildings in the cities and towns, shattered trees in the forests, and a beach strewed with wrecks attest the violence of the preceding hour, and so is it with these human strifes. The decision of the three lawyers, although decisive according to the terms of the submission, was far from being so morally. It failed to carry the healing balm that is necessary to allay the passions of the human heart. The animosities that had been engendered among the brethren and the sisters would not down at the bidding of the law, and the sting of the cross words that had been said during the continuance of the discussion still rankled in the hearts of many. A principle had been settled and a dead function had been brought to life, but there were unburied wrecks of feeling scattered all over the field of the late conflict. Men who had, as they thought, loved each other felt that the sentiment was only an apparition, and they wept in secret at the delusion.

There was no longer the same cordiality among all the brethren as before, and the cold side-glance that had, in many cases, taken the place of the cheery smile of recognition grew more chilly as time wore on, and, slight and insufficient as had been the cause, many friendships were broken if not utterly destroyed.

Among the Ebenezer people these manifestations were particularly noticeable. That congregation was largely opposed to what they considered an innovation, and were strong in support of the pretensions of the trustees; and so, some time after the matter had been settled by the lawyers, a number of the members of that society, realizing the altered condition of their relations, concluded that they would be more happy under a vine whose grapes were less sour, and a fig-tree whose fruit had not been made bitter by the contention of human strife, and at about the beginning of the year 1833 some fifty to sixty members of Ebenezer withdrew from that society, and after having worshipped for awhile at the Commissioners' Hall, Southwark, in the immediate shadow of "Old Ebenezer," they organized themselves into a new one, which they entitled

ST. PAUL'S METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

At this period there stood on the east side of Fifth Street, above Catharine, a small brick church edifice, which had been constructed by a society of "Primitive Methodists," most of whom were from England. The congregation was not a prosperous one, and after having struggled for some years it yielded to a sort of "manifest destiny," and, the "Methodist Protestant Church" having been organized in 1830, the little church fell into the hands of a society in that connection. This new denomination, which, as seen in a previous chapter, was the result of a secession from the Methodist Episcopal Church, was no more successful than were the

"Primitives," and when the St. Paul's people withdrew from Ebenezer the "Methodist Protestants" were already tiring of their experiment and ready to sell out. The location was a very suitable one for the new society, and negotiations were at once begun which resulted in the purchase of the Fifth Street house. This much having been accomplished, application was at once made to Conference for recognition, which was promptly accorded, Rev. William Urie being appointed pastor in charge. Mr. Urie was followed by Rev. William A. Wiggans, and he by Rev. William Barns. Among the original members of St. Paul's, and constituting, in part, its first board of trustees, were Messrs. John Whiteman, Edmund G. Yard, Isaac Lampleugh, Nicholas Toy, Evan Dalrymple, and Joseph Lonton.

The new society was extremely prosperous and gathered in new members rapidly, so that in the course of two or three years the members were ready to exclaim, with Isaiah, "The place is too strait for me," and at the beginning of the year 1837 a committee was appointed for the purpose of seeking a suitable lot on which to build a new church edifice. At this period there was on the north side of Catharine Street, above Sixth, a large vacant lot belonging to Mr. Paul Beck. There was plenty of other vacant ground in the neighborhood in those days, but this one seemed to strike the fancy of the committeemen, and they accordingly called on Mr. Beck to inquire the price and terms on which the ground could be procured.

A PRINCELY GIVER.

Mr. Beck was known to be a generous and liberal-hearted man, a circumstance that doubtless influenced the committee to prefer his lot, but they were disappointed when they called on him nevertheless. Having stated the object of their visit, Mr. Beck said, "Why, gentlemen, I've been keeping that lot for a church, and intended at some time to build one there and give it to some good congregation; but," he added, "I would like to know something about you. Give me some reference, and, if I find you, as you appear to be, the right kind of men, I'll give you the lot and ten thousand dollars towards building the church." The reference was of course promptly given, and it took Mr. Beck a very short time to learn the standing of the parties, and when they called upon him again he was prompt to say that he was ready to make good his promise. At his suggestion an agreement was drawn, in which he on his part stipulated for the nominal sum of one dollar to convey the lot to the society in fee-simple, and to advance or contribute the sum already mentioned, in instalments of one thousand dollars each as the work on the buildings progressed, and these arrangements having been completed the work of construction was at once begun.

The Methodists at the period we are now referring to were not the poor people whom we have had occasion to refer to on previous occasions. We remember the gentlemen whom we have named as men of some substance forty years ago, and they prosecuted the work in hand with prompt energy, not calling upon their

liberal patron until after they had accomplished considerable more work than was stipulated for in the agreement; but when they did go they found him open-handed. "Why," said he, "gentlemen, you want more than a thousand dollars; you are getting along finely; take two or three thousand. I have the money, and you may as well take it and make yourselves comfortable."

Mr. Beck was a Lutheran, although he generally worshipped at the Episcopal Church. He was a gentleman of the old school, who, instead of putting a padlock on his pocket or his heart, as do the millionnaires of the present day, believed and acted on the principle that he was the almoner of a God who had prospered him beyond his deserving. The new church was completed during the year 1837, and, although plain and unadorned by the artistic craft of the architect, it is yet one of the finest Methodist church edifices in Philadelphia.

J. N. Maffitt.

CHAPTER XVI.

Rev. John Newland Maffitt.

"MAY I perish," said Quintilian, "if the all-powerful Creator of nature and Architect of this world has impressed man with any character which so eminently distinguishes him from other animals as the faculty of speech." Of course, the great teacher of oratory had no intention to confine this sentiment to the mere ability of intelligible utterance. On the contrary, he referred to the wonderful power of improved, refined, and eloquent speech, by which the passions are roused to fierce combat, the soul inspired to deeds of noble daring, and the heart melted to tears,—that sort of speech which is

> "Beautiful as Tirza, comely as Jerusalem:
> Terrible as an army with banners."

It was about the year 1824–25 that there appeared in the Methodist pulpits of this country, like a meteor or a sparkling flame, one of the most brilliant, imaginative, and magnetic preachers that has, even to this day, ever flourished as a pulpit orator. There have been Whitefields, Spurgeons, Cookmans, and Durbins, and many other brilliant preachers, but none, perhaps, who possessed in an equal degree the power to move and carry away masses of men and women as distinguished the preaching of John Newland Maffitt.

Mr. Maffitt was an Irishman, born in the city of Dublin, in the year 1794, and emigrated to this country in the year 1819, in company with a younger brother, landing at New York. He was the son of highly-respectable and somewhat opulent parents, and was well educated. Although raised under religious influences, he was in early life a devotee of fashion, and gave himself up to the blandishments and frivolities of what is termed—per courtesy, we presume—the best society. He shone as a bright particular star in the ball-rooms of his native city, and worshipped at the shrine of the painted and powdered beauties of the dramatic stage.

He was of medium stature, rather undersized, and bore upon his shoulders a somewhat remarkable head, which presented, in connection with the contour of the facial development, something the appearance of an inverted bell, phrenologically, as was thought, indicating a very large brain, but practically, suggesting to the careful student a closed vessel only partially filled with wine. He had what is termed a "harelip," which gave to his face a peculiar appearance, and the immense crowds of women that followed him from one church to another considered him "handsome," if not beautiful.* He dressed in the most elegant style, observing

* It may be that men are not competent judges in regard to what the other sex consider as beautiful in this regard, but our own judgment of Mr. Maffitt is that he was but passably "good-looking." He was slightly deformed, one of his shoulders being somewhat higher than the other, and he was "bow-legged," two defects which he carefully and scrupulously concealed by having his clothing padded.

the very latest fashion. His hand was small, delicate, and soft as that of a woman, and his coal-black hair imparted a radiance to his features that rendered them attractive in repose and wildly bright when, with impassioned frenzy, he vaulted away in what were really extraordinary flights of oratorical display.

AS A PREACHER,

Mr. Maffitt was sensational in the highest degree. His power of language was wonderful, and his style of oratory was dramatic in the extreme. He had evidently studied the arts of elocution with effect, and he drew upon the wealth of Shakspeare with such unsparing hand as rendered him for the time being absolute master of human impulse. His figures of speech, his tropes and metaphors, were twined and fashioned with such skill, and delivered with such beauty as to captivate the most sluggish mind, and he was able to run away with his audience when addressing to it the simplest of propositions. A splendid, indeed, a magnificent, pulpit orator, he was yet not a great preacher. He was, as we may say, scientifically magnetic, finished, flowery, and dazzling. A scintillating genius, a perfect master of rhetoric,

"His words seemed oracles."

There were plenty of men in the Conference who would preach a sounder and more practical sermon, but none who could approximate to his style of dressing up and presenting a very ordinary thought or idea. As an

illustration of this we may note a sermon preached in Cincinnati, the circumstances of which are narrated by a gentleman who heard it. "He painted," says the writer, "in glowing colors the joys of heaven, until it seemed as though the whole multitude could scarcely refrain from bursting into one united shout of glory. 'And this,' he exclaimed, 'is to have no end. Oh, eternity! who can comprehend that word? Why, my friends,' said he, 'if a little bird were to come from a distant planet and to take into its bill one grain of sand from the huge mass of the earth, and fly away with it, and be gone a thousand years, and then return, and take another grain and fly away with it, and be gone another thousand years, and so on, every thousand years one grain, what ages of ages would be required to carry away the earth, with its eight thousand miles of diameter! and yet, this but dimly shadows the meaning of the awful word eternity. This task, though requiring millions of ages upon millions of ages, would at last come to an end, but the punishment of the lost shall endure forever.' This is not more than a common-place illustration, which presents nothing new, but yet the congregation, on that occasion, was moved to the usual wonderful extent; and dramatically stepping down from the pulpit, hymn-book in hand, the preacher said, 'I will now sing a hymn in which the congregation will please not join.' He was also a fine singer, and, having finished the hymn, mourners were invited to the 'altar,' which was immediately crowded." It was during that series of meetings in the Queen City

of the West that one of the hardest cases in the town, governed by curiosity, doubtless, made his way to the church where Maffitt was preaching in the evening. He was an auctioneer of horses, very dissipated and profane, and, charmed by the rhetorical flourishes of the preacher and the beauty of his descriptions, he, too, found his way to the altar, and absolutely left it in the belief that he was converted, and, as we are bound to believe, for a time, at least, mended his ways; but it was not long, as it appears, before the devil again asserted his authority over the horse-jockey, and some time afterward Maffitt was walking down the street in company with a friend, and, encountering the auctioneer, who was making "worm fence" as he proceeded along the sidewalk, the companion of the preacher said, "There, Maffitt, is one of your converts," to which the latter replied, "Yes, he must be one of mine, for if God had converted him he would not be in that condition." The response, however, was not original with Maffitt, for it was borrowed from Whitefield.*

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* It is related in another place that on an occasion when he was to preach at Salem Church, in Philadelphia, the house being densely crowded, he was passed in through a window at the rear end of the building. This dramatic spectacle was also enacted at the Willit Street Church in New York, where a ladder was fixed against the rear wall, Maffitt ascending it, and crawling in at a window above the pulpit. At that church and on that occasion, as related to us by a lady who was present, the excitement was intense. The sermon was preached for the benefit of a charitable fund, perhaps of a missionary character, and Mr. Maffitt in the course of an impassioned appeal for contributions,

was a subject for much study. It was one of sunshine and clouds; he grovelled in the throes of deep distress or revelled in the luxury of popular applause as the petted favorite of the hour. Although, as already remarked, a bright and scintillating genius, he was withal, as we read him, a whited sepulchre. He was like a beautiful yet unbreathing statue; a magnificent painting wanting life; a splendid architectural structure devoid of emotion. Many persons refused to believe that he had ever truly experienced religion; and we think there is reason enough therefor "on which to hang a doubt." Judging him from the experiences as presented by himself in his "Tears of Contrition" or "Sketches of His Life," his approaches to the throne of mercy were dictated by the instinct of fear. His bane was self-love; he was vain as a peacock, and he could not therefore be other than what he was, a pampered and greatly-spoiled individual.* He was a sort of pyrotechnic

called upon the ladies to divest themselves of their gold rings and neck-chains, and deposit them in the collection-plates, and so great was his power over that portion of the audience that very many pieces of jewelry, some of them quite costly, were put into the plates.

* As an illustration of the great preacher's vanity, it may be stated that, when at the zenith of his fame, before going to the church to preach he would repair to his barber in a carriage, and having undergone an exquisite tonsorial operation, he would carry his hat in his hand, and ride to the church bareheaded, lest the elaborate, if not artistic, arrangement of his hair might be disturbed.

exhalation, and so selfish as to have never let go the idolatry of his own person,—a circumstance that must necessarily have worked as a consuming fire. He was weak and vacillating, and the star that shone for a while with such refulgent brightness set in a cloud of obscurity.

Mr. Maffitt was deprived of a father's care at an early period in his life,—a circumstance that may have accounted for much of his vacillating conduct in later years. Doctor Sprague, in his "American Pulpit," says his mother intended him for a commercial life. However this may be, it is certain that he did not enter into that business. His father, as we have learned from Mr. Wm. H. Elsegood, of Philadelphia,* was what in those days was termed a "mercer and tailor," in other words, a merchant tailor, and the son learned the same business, and had his shop, or store, in Anglesa Street, Dublin.

The same gentleman says he was a superior cutter and fitter, and had at one time an extensive run of custom from theatrical people, and for a time did an excellent business. While thus engaged he wrote a play, which was put upon the stage and performed at the Hawkins Street Theatre, Dublin. Although Mr. Elsegood witnessed the performance of the play, in company with his friend Maffitt, from the "wings" of the stage, he is

* Mr. Elsegood, who still lives at the green old age of over fourscore years, was an intimate associate of young Maffitt in Dublin. He (Mr. E.) was a member of Henry Moore's class at City Road Chapel as early as 1802.

unable to recollect its name or title. Mr. Maffitt, however, was never on the stage as an actor, as has been sometimes stated.

He married rather early in life a beautiful young lady, who was a "shop girl" in the store of a Dublin corset-maker. The marriage does not seem to have been a happy one. The young wife is said to have been very fond of theatrical amusements and gay society, and the change in the husband's life to the ministry may have contributed in some degree to the marital "unpleasantness." Maffitt's efforts to become a preacher in Ireland were not very successful. Many of his friends, doubtless with a perfectly correct appreciation of the fickleness of his nature, opposed his aspirations in that direction; but notwithstanding the fact that he met with many obstructions, he persisted in his efforts, until after awhile he fell sick, and just here, before leaving Ireland for this country, his condition and position is enveloped in much of mystery. As we learn from his own statement, when in bad health and broken in spirit, laboring under one of those depressions with which he was frequently visited, his brother came to him and proposed that together they should emigrate to America, and under the impulse of the moment, as it were, the voyage was determined on, and leaving wife and children to care for themselves as they best could, he landed in New York, as previously stated. For a time after landing in this country he was lost to the world, and probably gained a subsistence by plying the needle. After being in New York for some time, the

brother by whom he was accompanied called on him and rallied him from the torpid condition in which he seemed to be existing, and suggested and urged that he should visit a camp-meeting then being held in Connecticut, and brave the field. He did so, and making one of his brilliant oratorical displays, he was immediately taken by the hand, and in 1822 he joined the travelling connection as a member of the New England Conference. He continued his connection with that Conference until 1831, during which time he travelled and preached to immense audiences in various parts of the country, and "located" in 1832, and never resumed an effective relation afterwards.

During what we may term his metropolitan itinerancy, he was the cynosure of thousands of women, and one of them, a Miss Pierce, of Brooklyn, fell deeply in love with him, and haunted his steps wherever he went. She was wealthy, or, at least, "well to do," and had her horses and carriage, and she followed him with such persistence and endearments that he finally married her.* The union proved an unhappy one. The lady probably found that not all is gold that glitters, and the preacher learned, ere long, that sometimes

"Love with gall and honey doth abound,"

and directly, as it seemed, the mixture became so embittered as to become a torment instead of a pleasure.

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* It has been thought by many persons that this marriage was solemnized while the first Mrs. M. was still living. This, we are assured by the gentleman already quoted, was not the fact.

Among the incidents current concerning the social life of the preacher was this: On a certain occasion some two or three friends accompanied him home, and, it being evening, Mr. Maffitt requested the lady to get them a light supper. After a while the bell tinkled, and the gentlemen repaired to the dining-room. The table was set in the usual style, except that at each plate was a lighted candle, but not a mouthful of anything to eat. The gentlemen were seated, and the lady took her accustomed position at one end of the table, and there appearing no prospect for anything to eat, Mr. Maffitt said, "Well, my dear, where is the food?" "Didn't you tell me," said she, "to get you a *light* supper? here is plenty of light." The tradition does not state whether or not anything more substantial was furnished after this development. Neither do we vouch for the truth of it. It is, however, a fair illustration of what was understood to be the incongruous nature of the inner or social life of the couple. Strange, incomprehensible creature as was this man, glittering and evanescent, we may yet not doubt that his preaching was productive of much good. He certainly roused the multitude, and many hundreds, if not thousands, were not only awakened through his instrumentality, but soundly converted.

We are not able to state at what time the brilliancy of Maffitt's star began to pale, nor the specific reason therefor, but it could not be otherwise than that such a nature in such a sphere must come to grief. Many unpleasant, if not ill-natured, things were said of him,

and that he laid himself open to much adverse criticism is beyond question. Mr. Elsegood tells us of an occurrence which he witnessed on an occasion before he left Dublin, when with a brother he was out during the evening on church business, and knowing that Maffitt was to preach in the Strand, they concluded to call in on their way home. When they reached the church and entered, the preacher was in the act of pronouncing the benediction, and so soon as he had finished he sprang quickly to the floor and, going among the sisters, greeted several of them with a kiss.

In 1835, Mr. Maffitt associated himself with Rev. Lewis Garret, of Nashville, Tennessee, in the publication of the *Western Methodist.* In 1836–37 he was agent for a college in Alabama, and subsequently was elected professor of *belles-lettres* and elocution, a position which he filled for but a very short time, if indeed he at all entered on its duties. He was at one time, in 1841, chaplain to the National House of Representatives, and he died suddenly, in May, 1850, of heart-disease, declaring almost with his last breath that his enemies had broken his heart. And thus was extinguished a life whose brilliancy and magnetic power for a time challenged the admiration of the New World, and whose mysterious fatality brought a pang of grief to countless friends.

CHAPTER XVII.

Lay Delegation—The Philadelphia Movement.

We have claimed for the "Quaker City," in an early chapter of this series, the merit of being, practically, at least, the birthplace of American Methodism, and it is a matter of just pride with very many of the brethren that to the action, influence, and energy of Philadelphia Methodists is due a reform, or improvement in structure or polity, that has contributed largely to the splendid success that has marked the progress of the Church during these later years. It is to the preachers, as pioneers in the wilderness, who traversed the waste places, the forests, and the towns and cities, and cut the way for Gospel truth, that we owe the introduction and establishment of Methodism; but it is to the laity that we are indebted for the vast material agencies and energies that have given to it the present colossal proportions. The missionary work, the Sunday-school enterprises, and the establishment of institutions of learning—nurseries from which are supplied the educated and cultivated talent with which our pulpits are now in a large measure filled—are mainly the work of the laity.

Incidentally, in the course of these sketches, we have had occasion to refer to the demand which, from time

to time, arose for such a modification of "the restrictive rules" of the Church as would allow of

A LAY REPRESENTATION IN THE GENERAL CONFERENCE;

but, as the subject is an important one, and closely allied in principle to that on which the general government of the country is based, it will doubtless be of interest if we sketch more elaborately the progress of the proposition until it was finally conceded and consummated.

There was, doubtless, good reason at the beginning for confining the legislative power of the Church exclusively to the clergy, but from the earliest existence or establishment of Methodism in America, there was a certain degree of unrest among the people in regard to the subject, although for many years it appeared merely as an inactive sentiment; but there would often be occasions when the utter helplessness of the laity concerning matters affecting their interest, or in which their opinions were involved, was not only severely felt but strongly deprecated. The local preachers, especially, from an early period objected to the rule that denied them admission to the General Conference, and, as the Church grew in numbers and accumulated property, it was plain to be seen that a different and more business-like element was needed in the legislative body; the preachers, however, sternly resisted the demand for a more popular representation.

As was seen in a previous chapter, it was not until

the year 1808 that the demand for a *delegated body* of preachers was conceded, and even then not until there was danger of secession did the majority yield the point. Following upon this result, and thus early there was a more active discussion of the principle of lay representation, but there was for several years no active movement to promote the success of the measure; but in the interim, however, between the two General Conferences of 1816 and 1820 the discussion was greatly increased, and immediately after the adjournment of the Conference of 1820 Rev. William S. Stockton, an active member of the Church, to whom we have had occasion to refer previously, commenced the publication at Trenton of his *Wesleyan Repository.* In this journal were demanded and advocated several radical changes in the polity of the Church, prominent among which was the right to lay representation. This was the first pronounced public demand for the reform, and, as will be remembered, the movement begun by Mr. Stockton eventuated in a secession, and the establishment of the "Methodist Protestant Church."

THE REFORM MOVEMENT,

which was inaugurated by the establishment of Mr. Stockton's paper and resulted as just stated, gave much vitality to the discussion of the lay delegate question, which was not by any means confined to "the extremists" which he and some others represented; but, on the contrary, many of the best and most conservative men in the connection entered into the movement.

"The reformers," however, demanded too much. They required the abolition or material modification of both the episcopal office and the presiding eldership. They sought to accomplish what they termed "republican Methodism," and would have destroyed the entire Church fabric, doubtless, if they could have had their own way, and it is probable that the right of lay representation would have been conceded much sooner than it was if "the reformers" had been less aggressive or reckless in their demands and methods. The subject was under discussion in the Conference of 1828, not, however, as a distinctive proposition, but in connection with the other so-called "reforms" already mentioned; and again, in 1840, after the secession of the "Methodist Protestants," it was considered on petitions from some of the societies, and, indeed, at nearly every session there were petitions from individuals and churches asking for the change, which were uniformly referred and reported upon negatively.

BEGINNING OF THE PHILADELPHIA MOVEMENT.

In the month of November, 1851, an informal meeting of Methodist gentlemen was held at the store of Messrs. Hieskell, Hoskins & Co., on the corner of Fifth and Market Streets, Philadelphia, at which there were present Messrs. Colson Hieskell, Cornelius A. Walborn, Dr. William B. Tilden, T. K. Collins, William Carlisle, John Whiteman, J. B. Chrisman, William P. Hacker, James J. Boswell, Samuel Ashmead, John M. Wetherill, and John Huff. This meeting was convened on account

of a difficulty that had taken place between Mr. Thomas W. Price, then a class-leader at St. George's, and the pastor in charge, Rev. W. M. D. Ryan, and a recurrence to the circumstance will show what great results are, under the providence of God, frequently accomplished from an apparently insignificant beginning. It is scarcely worth while to narrate here the particulars of the grievance complained of by Mr. Price; suffice it to say that, after considerable conversation on that subject, the general condition of the Church came under review, when one of the gentlemen present—Mr. Walborn, we think—suggested that there was really no remedy for any grievance that might arise, except through the preachers, and that the laity being, under the existing system of Church government, powerless, there would have to be ere long an alteration of the representative body of the Church, so that the membership would have a voice in its conduct. It was also urged that there was a generally apathetic condition throughout the connection, much of which was believed to be attributable to the absence of the popular element from the deliberative councils of the Church, and these views being concurred in by the parties present, a second meeting was held at the store of Mr. Walborn. At this second meeting it was agreed to call together

A MEETING OF LAY MEMBERS FROM ALL THE CHURCHES,

and in furtherance of that object the following circular

was issued to one hundred members, representatives of twenty churches then in active work:

"DEAR SIR: The undersigned have been appointed a committee to invite five lay members from each of the M. E. churches of the city and districts to meet at Trinity M. E. Church, at 7½ o'clock, on Thursday evening, 20th inst., to consider the present condition of the Church and the propriety of petitioning the ensuing General Conference in relation to some matters deemed essential to its future prosperity.

"*You* are earnestly invited to be present.

"C. A. WALBORN, "JOHN WHITEMAN,
"C. HIESKELL, "J. B. CHRISMAN,
"W. P. TILDEN, "W. P. HACKER,
"T. K. COLLINS.

"PHILADELPHIA, November 17, 1851."

In response to this call ninety-eight gentlemen met in Trinity Church on the 20th of November, 1851. Mr. James J. Boswell, of Union Church, was called to the chair, and the following-named members were designated as Vice-Presidents: T. K. Collins, Nazareth; P. R. McNeille, Eighth Street; Colson Hieskell, Trinity; G. B. Longacre, St. George's; John Thompson, Ebenezer; Samuel Ashmead, Union; George Hamilton, Kensington; and Michael Fricke, Cohocksink; and for Secretaries, Messrs. William P. Hacker, J. B. Chrisman, and William Carlisle, Jr., were chosen. The meeting was opened with prayer by Rev. David H.

Kollock,* after which its object was stated by the chairman, and Dr. Tilden, having moved for the appointment of a committee to report business, Messrs. Tilden, Cummings, Hieskell, Collins, and Ashmead were appointed.

The preamble and resolutions reported by the committee were drawn with much care, and, when submitted to a vote, were agreed to with only two dissenting voices. The preamble declared that it "is evident to any observing mind that the Church is not fulfilling, as could be desired, the great and important objects of its mission." It was assumed that the reason therefor was traceable to "the unequal rights, interests, and dependencies of the ministry and laity," and the belief was expressed that a fair distribution of these between the ministers and lay members would insure the welfare and efficiency of both, and redound to the honor of the Church; and it was, therefore,

"*Resolved*, That this meeting, composed of members of the various Methodist Episcopal churches in the city and districts of Philadelphia, take immediate steps to call a general meeting of all the lay brethren of the Church in the city and county of Philadelphia, in view of petitioning the next General Conference for such alterations in the government of the Church as will

* Mr. Kollock was for many years an earnest, faithful, and zealous local preacher in Philadelphia, and is remembered especially by the poor on account of his kindly deeds among them when suffering under affliction.

remove any objectionable features that may present themselves, and secure to the laity a voice in its councils.

"*Resolved*, That in this movement we wish to be distinctly understood as disavowing all 'radical' or schismatic purposes, and adhering alone to those of a purely conservative character, having for their objects the good of the Church in all its relations.

"*Resolved*, That we now, as ever, entertain the greatest confidence in the intelligence, usefulness, and piety of the ministry of our Church, and most cordially invite them to unite their influence and efforts with ours in the accomplishment of the objects contemplated in the first resolution.

"*Resolved*, That a committee, to consist of nine persons, be appointed by the chairman of this meeting to act as an executive committee, whose business it shall be to procure a suitable place of meeting, prepare resolutions, nominate officers, and whatever else may be necessary to carry the objects of this meeting into effect."

We quote these resolutions *in extenso* because they constitute an important part of the history of American Methodism. It was well stated at this meeting that for six or eight years previously the Church had been standing still, if not retrograding. As matters were at that time the structural government of the Church was an aristocracy, a system under which it must have rotted and fallen in pieces within the second century of its existence; and the Philadelphia movement of 1851,

begun in a dry-goods store, was designed to give to it such vitality as would save it from a destruction that must have followed upon the attempt to perpetuate a government so foreign to all the traditions of the republic. There is one element of society in our country that will consent to live under an aristocratic or even an oligarchical Church government, but it is not such as is gathered into the Methodist, the Episcopal, the Baptist, or the Presbyterian Church, and it is hence we state that the reform here sought to be obtained was essential, not only to the prosperity of the Church, but its continued existence in the future.

The committee appointed under the fourth resolution consisted of Messrs. Tilden, Ashmead, Cummings, McNeille, Hieskell, Kollock, Chrisman, Whiteman, and Huff. They organized promptly, and at once issued circulars to the male members of all the societies for

A MEETING AT UNION CHURCH, ON THE 11TH OF DECEMBER.

This meeting was well attended, and organized by calling Samuel Ashmead to the chair, with Anthony Null, James J. Boswell, Archibald Wright, John Bell Robinson, T. K. Collins, Ephraim Clark, James B. Dare, J. Y. Calder, David Horn, Matthew Kramer, C. P. Steinman, Rudolph Hoeflick, William Rhoades, William Divine, John Caldwell, James W. Early, John Ashcraft, Robert Boone, John W. Heins, Israel James, J. Shallcross, William Walker, William Rose, Sr., as

Vice-Presidents, and William P. Hacker, C. A. Walborn, Thomas W. Price, and George Hamilton, as Secretaries.

The proceedings at this meeting were very similar to those at Trinity. The needs of the Church were restated, and the general spirit evinced clearly indicated that the new movement was to be vigorously and energetically pressed; and Mr. Alexander Cummings, on behalf of the committee previously appointed, presented a series of resolutions which was adopted with great unanimity, except that a number of gentlemen doubted the expediency of claiming lay representation in the Annual Conferences. As at the Trinity meeting, the resolutions adopted were well and carefully drawn, the principal one providing for the appointment of a committee of twenty persons, "to adopt the necessary measures to call a General Convention, to be held in the city of Philadelphia, on Wednesday, the 3d of March, 1852, to consist of delegates from the various stations and circuits within the bounds of our Church, to take into consideration the propriety of petitioning the General Conference for such action as will secure the introduction of lay delegates into our Conferences, and such other modifications in the government of our Church as the wisdom of the Convention may suggest."

The committee of twenty appointed at this meeting had for its chairman President Allen, of Girard College, and they in a very short time issued an address "To the ministry and laity of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States."

On the 3d of March, at ten o'clock, the Convention met in Nazareth Church, Mr. Hieskell being called temporarily to the chair. Delegates were present on the first day from various sections of the State and all the city churches, and from New York, Vermont, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Ohio, District of Columbia, etc. Before proceeding to a permanent organization the Convention determined to spend some time in devotional exercises, during which Brothers Watkins of New York City, Root of Buffalo, and Black of Pittsburgh severally addressed the Throne of Grace, and the report of the committee on Permanent Organization being then received, Professor Allen, of Girard College, was chosen President, with Vice-Presidents and Secretaries from the respective localities represented in the Convention.

On the second day the Convention met in Trinity Church, and after devotional exercises Mr. John Whiteman, chairman of the committee appointed for the purpose, made report of a series of resolutions, which, after being fully discussed, were adopted with great unanimity. The resolutions provided for a committee to cause the memorial and resolutions to be circulated throughout the connection and to attend the General Conference and present the same, and urge upon it the grant of its prayer. The key-note of this movement was thus given by President Allen in his address to the Convention before its adjournment: "If the Conference shall reject our petition let me say to you and to the Church that this movement will not end here. It will still go on and

prosper. We shall not secede; we shall not tear the bosom of the Church which has nurtured us; we shall set up no separate organization, but we shall strive, by all lawful and Christian means, to obtain four years hence what we fail to obtain now. And if we are again refused we shall not be conquered; we shall renew the struggle until we do succeed. And believe me, though we may have to wait long, the brother is in this Convention who will live to see the right of representation confirmed to the laity, and to witness the assembling of lay delegates in our Annual and General Conferences."

Nearly three decades of time have elapsed since this movement was begun and these utterances were given to the world. The Conference of 1852, which met in Boston only a few weeks later, turned the suppliants away empty-handed; but we know the fact that a deep and lasting impression was made upon its members by the committee appointed from the Philadelphia Convention. In 1856—a year of great political excitement—the appeal was again made, and again the preachers refused to divide their power with their brethren, but the work of argument and persuasion went on. The brethren were calm, dispassionate, but oh, how earnest in the pursuit of their object! and in 1860 the Conference passed a resolution expressing its willingness to grant the request, provided it was desired by a majority of the membership, lay and clerical, and providing also for a submission of the proposition to such a vote. This, it will be remembered, was

THE CRUCIAL PERIOD IN THE HISTORY OF OUR COUNTRY.

The Rebellion had not yet broken out when the Conference was adjourned, but ere the people were called on to cast their votes in the churches for or against the reform movement, the ghastly goddess of the battle-field had

> "Waved her dread pinion to the breeze of morn,
> Peal'd her loud drum and twang'd her trumpet horn,"

and men of all sects and degrees in life were rushing to those sanguinary fields of carnage and death, on which the blood of an hundred thousand men was shed to save the life of the government under whose benign rule and care all the churches had grown into life and usefulness. There was but little time to consider anything but the great business of the day. The life of a great nation was suspended in the balance, and as men hurried to and fro they forgot for the time that they had a personal grievance that required their attention, and when the vote was counted it was found that but twenty-three thousand eight hundred and eighty-four had voted in favor of the proposition, while forty-seven thousand eight hundred and fifty-five had voted against it. But peace, with all her allurements, brought the people back to the churches, and the great work of the century having been accomplished, the brethren turned their attention again toward the Conference, seeking those personal rights in the Church the possession of which in the

nation had been resealed through spilling the blood of many martyrs, and again the Conference, at its session of 1868, submitted the question to the people for their judgment. This time there was no hesitancy nor uncertain sound, and when the votes were gathered in and counted it was found that more than a hundred thousand had been given in support of the demand for lay representation, while only about fifty thousand had doubted the expediency of the proposition and voted in the negative, and at the Conference of 1872 the churches throughout the entire connection were represented in part by lay delegates; and thus, in just twenty years after the adjournment of the Philadelphia Convention was the prophecy of President Allen verified, and the member of that body who had preceded him in filling the chair as its presiding officer temporarily in 1852 occupied a seat on the floor of the General Conference of 1872 as a lay delegate thereto from the churches of the city of Philadelphia.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Rev. Joseph Rusling.

Of all the mighty agencies and energies that may be invoked by civilization for a controlling power the press, with its adjunct of types, is without doubt the greatest. With its millions of tongues, it invades every land, takes possession of every household, penetrates every cloister, reigns supreme among all peoples, and dominates the great heart of mankind. Honestly, intelligently, and virtuously conducted, it is the greatest blessing that can be bestowed on the human family, and prostituted to dishonest or licentious purposes, it would constitute such a curse as only the powers of hell could equal. Speech alone can venture to successfully contend with types and the power of the press. An eminent member of the Philadelphia Bar in its palmy days, who was distinguished above most of his contemporaries on account of his eloquence and brilliancy of speech, said, "One inspired and accomplished orator, of himself, without the influence of birth or fortune, or any external aid, drawing only upon his own intellectual resources, shall confront the press, raise and quell armies at pleasure, stand forth unblenching in the full blaze of royalty, govern whole nations, and enchant while he governs. There is no aristocracy," said he,

Dr. Rush

"so supreme and unquestionable as the aristocracy of speech."

In front of Fifth Street Methodist Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, lie buried the mortal remains of Rev. Joseph Rusling, whom we remember as one of the most pleasing and effective preachers of the olden time. Mr. Rusling was born in Lincolnshire, England, in the year 1788. His parents emigrated to the United States in 1795, landing in New York, and proceeded shortly thereafter to the vicinity of Hackettstown, in Warren County, New Jersey, where they settled. They were people in very moderate circumstances, and the elder Rusling commenced at once the business of farming, in which he was assisted by the son as he grew up to manhood. When about twenty years of age the subject of this sketch was, at a camp-meeting held in the neighborhood, converted to God, and in four years thereafter he began preaching. In the year 1814 he was received in the Philadelphia Conference on trial, and in 1816 admitted into full connection. As we remember Mr. Rusling, he was a gentleman of rather delicate physical organization. He was of medium stature, with a head indicating marked intellectual capacity. He had a clear, dark, and penetrating eye, and was altogether a person of decidedly prepossessing appearance. Raised on the farm and to labor in the fields, he had but little opportunity for education. He was, however, a boy of studious and thoughtful nature; and as a man, earnest and energetic in the pursuit of knowledge. He became, after entering upon his ministerial labors, a pupil of

Rev. William Mann, under whose tuition he studied and acquired what were wont to be termed "the dead languages."*

Intellectually, Mr. Rusling was above the average of the Methodist preachers of his time. As an author he was prolific. He wrote much and well, and it is to be regretted that, in consequence of what must be stated as the infidelity of one on whom he relied for the compilation and preparation of a very considerable amount of manuscript, the world has but slight opportunity to judge of his productions. He was a constant contributor to such Methodist literary publications as passed through the press during his active life, such as *The Methodist Magazine, Youth's Instructor*, etc. Many of his sermons were published in pamphlet form, but they were never concentrated or brought together and published as a whole. Among the works published by him were "Devotional Exercises," a volume of poetry containing some two hundred and fifty pages, and published in 1836. "Original Hymns for Sunday-schools" was issued in 1837, and "The Christian's Companion," published a year later, was a transposition into verse of a portion of the Psalms of David and other

* Rev. William Mann was for many years a local preacher in Philadelphia, and conducted a classical academy on Vine Street west of Fourth. He was celebrated as a linguist and a successful teacher of the ancient languages, and was to the Methodist preachers of the olden time very much like what Solon and Socrates were to the many students who sought them for instruction in philosophy in the early ages of the world.

selections from the Holy Scriptures. He also attempted and published for some time a small Sunday-school journal, but lacking the necessary support it was discontinued.

During twenty-two years of active pulpit work Mr. Rusling was constantly engaged in literary pursuits.

AS A POET

he was simple, plain, always devotional. His muse was a religious one; his poetry was all prayer and praise, chaste and pure as the leaflets that cluster around the eternal throne of God. In the log cabin on a Jersey circuit; in the stately city church; in the smiling valley, or amid the busy haunts of trade and commerce, his harp was ever attuned to praise of the Redeemer. He sung, as was said of another better known to fame, "not to the God of Nature alone, but as the Almighty Father and *Friend* revealed in the life-giving Gospel of Jesus Christ." Modest, unpretentious, earnest, and laborious, Rusling lived in an atmosphere peculiar to himself. His was a life of earnest devotion, of deep thought and trustful confidence, but he did not shun the world, neither did he affect to despise either its duties or allurements; on the contrary, he was a genial gentleman, a most pleasant companion, a devoted friend, and one of the most practical men, perhaps, among the Methodist ministers of his time.

Of his Sunday-school hymns, Dr. Durbin said they were really such, and the late Willis Gaylord Clark commended them highly for their "clearness and purity

of thought,"—qualities that rendered them peculiarly calculated to guide and interest the young mind.

We have said that Mr. Rusling's parents were in but moderate circumstances. They were poor people,—the traditional condition of the Methodist preacher of the olden time. When he was about starting on his first tour as an itinerant, his father borrowed for him a horse, not being able to purchase one for him, and his pious mother put into his hand a silver dollar; and thus he went forth bearing the message of the Master. His first circuit was what was known in those days as "Hamburg," in New Jersey, and it took in nearly if not quite all that portion of the State north of Trenton and well-nigh over to the beach on one side and to the Pennsylvania line on the other. Much of this circuit was an unbroken forest, with an occasional swamp, and the young preacher was obliged to carry a hatchet in his saddle-bags, with which he "blazed" the trees or cut off a limb, so that he could follow the trail back again. Mr. Rusling had for a colleague on this circuit Rev. George Banghart, and it was arranged between them that one should follow the other, and thus give the people the benefit of more frequent preaching, six weeks being required to go over the ground. Rusling went ahead and "blazed" the trees so that Banghart could follow, and on one occasion some mischievous men or boys of the country, thinking to lead the preachers on a sort of "wild goose chase," went on Rusling's trail, and, starting at a certain point, blazed the trees in a direction different from that he had taken,

and when Banghart came along he followed the new-made route, and at nightfall found himself on the edge of an extensive swamp, where he had the green turf for a pillow on which to rest his weary head, and the stars for candles to light him to his couch; but there was no sleep for the decoyed preacher, there being wolves and other wild animals in the Jersey forests and swamps at that period. Banghart retraced his steps the next day, and, striking Rusling's path again, brought up at the proper place. He christened the road to the swamp "the infernal saints' path." This was in 1814. In 1815 Mr. Rusling was assigned to

BURLINGTON CIRCUIT,

where there was a better civilization, and finding considerable population and a good church in the old town, the young preacher made up his mind that he would make an impression, and he prepared himself accordingly, and, as he related afterward, he thought he had been entirely successful. After the meeting had been closed and the preacher had stepped down from the pulpit, the brethren and sisters gathered around him to make his acquaintance, and, at the same time, bid him welcome; and, after the usual salutations and greetings were gone through with, an old lady, who had been viewing the scene, sidled up, and, taking Rusling by the arm, said, "What did you follow before you began to preach?" "I worked on the farm, with my father," he replied. "Well," said the sister, "if you can't preach any better than that, you'd better go

back to the plough." Many young men would have wilted under such a wet blanket, but not so with Rusling; he replied to the sister in his usual pleasant manner, and she afterward became one of his most fast friends. The truth was that the young preacher had gone beyond the old lady's depth, and developed a capacity which, as we shall see, caused him to be much sought after in later years throughout the Conference.

The next year he was transferred to Trenton circuit, —a still more comfortable place,—and in 1817–18 he was stationed at St. George's charge, when he alternated with the other preachers at Ebenezer, Salem, and Nazareth, and it was during this latter year that he rendered himself most active and useful in the enterprise of constructing the "New Ebenezer" church on Christian Street. He was extremely popular with the Ebenezer people, several of whom named their sons after him. Then the following year he was at Wilmington, and during 1821–22 he was stationed at St. John's, in Philadelphia, after which he was at New Brunswick, New Mills (now Pemberton), New Jersey, and at Newark: and in 1828 he was again stationed at St. John's, where he was continued during four years; and in 1832, the new Fifth Street church having been purchased for him, he was, by the bishops, assigned to that pastorate, making a continuous service of six years in the city. This was a most unusual circumstance, and entirely inconsistent with the rule which confined the city term to two years. There was, however, a reason for this departure from

rule, beyond the popularity of the preacher, which grew out of

AN EXTRAORDINARY OCCURRENCE.

Among the members at St. John's was a very respectable man named Anthony Shermer, who, during Mr. Rusling's pastorate, from some cause or other unknown to us, had got wrong in his head, and on a certain occasion, while Mr. Rusling was preaching, Shermer, in a loud tone of voice, exclaimed, "That's a lie!" The congregation was not only startled, but indignant, and proposed removing the offending member at once; but Mr. Rusling, in his quiet way, said, "Never mind, brethren, it affects no one but myself, and is of no consequence," and the affair was passed over, but not without a sensation that was continued in the congregation and neighborhood during the week. On the next Sabbath the offence was repeated in the same way, and, having been again condoned, matters rested until the following Sunday, when, as though the offender was made bold through the kind consideration and sympathy of friends, the disturbance was repeated a third time. This was too much, and the unfortunate Shermer was straightway taken out of the church and forthwith expelled from the society. The offender was perhaps just enough unhinged in mind to have become devilish, and, influenced, doubtless, by bad advisers, of whom there are always plenty on hand, he at once began a suit against Mr. Rusling and the trustees for damages. He employed as his counsel David Paul Brown, Esq.,

and one of the Rawles, and the church retained for their defence Hon. Josiah Randall and Peter A. Brown, Esq., who, in addition to being a most excellent lawyer, was something of a scientist. A good many delays took place before the cause was brought to trial, and when it was reached the verdict was for the defendant; but the other side was bent on mischief, apparently, and appealed. When Mr. Rusling's two years in the pastorate were about to expire the cause was still pending, and the bishops, thinking it would not be good policy to assign him elsewhere under the circumstances, reappointed him for two years more. These two years were also rolled away among the eternities, and still, by reason of the delays and continued motions and appeals of Mr. Shermer, the cause was undisposed of, and there seemed to the bishops a gravity about the position of the persecuted preacher that they must recognize and provide for.

At and previous to this time, say 1830, there was on the north side of Coates Street, above Second, a Presbyterian church of which "Jimmy Patterson" was the pastor. He held the most pronounced and, indeed, extreme views on the subject of election, and preached that there were children in hell only a week old. Notwithstanding the promulgation of such an egregious doctrine the society seemed to have succeeded, and at about this time they had purchased a lot on the west side of Fifth Street, on which was constructed what is now known as Fifth Street Methodist Episcopal Church.

But the Presbyterians exhausted their funds before

the building was completed, and were obliged to sell it. The friends of Mr. Rusling, inspired by the bishop, at once began negotiations for the purchase of the property, and in a very short time they were able to secure it, and, proceeding at once to finish the structure, a new temple was directly dedicated to God and Methodism, with "Josie Rusling," as the people were wont to name him, as its pastor. The new edifice had been designed, of course, by the Presbyterians for a pew-church, and the seating was on the floor, when purchased, so arranged, but without the doors, and so it was permitted to remain. It was tastefully finished, for Rusling was a man of order and taste, and the choir was for the first time placed in the end gallery, the latest improvement in this regard previously having been to station the singers in the centre of the congregation on the ground floor.

It is narrated of Rev. John Kennedy, who was stationed at this time in Wilmington, we believe, that at a Conference meeting he criticised Mr. Rusling's new church with some severity, saying that it was a pewed church, only that the doors were not hung, and he supposed the next thing would be to have a fiddle in the choir. It is something remarkable that the first preacher in charge of the first Methodist pew-church in Pennsylvania (Trinity) was the same Mr. Kennedy, who was delighted with the arrangement; thus time wears away the ragged edges from our prejudices, as "circumstances alter cases." This scrap of history accounts for Mr. Rusling's continuous service of six years in the city;

but we should not leave the subject without mentioning that the church of our Presbyterian friend Patterson, on Coates Street, was in after-years degraded to theatrical uses, and that the building is now devoted to the altogether respectable business of selling goods at auction. By the time Mr. Rusling's term of two years at Fifth Street had expired the lawsuit had ended, all the decisions being in favor of the preacher and his trustees, after which he was again sent to Wilmington, where he was also very popular.

Rusling was a very fine singer, and gave much attention to the music of all his congregations, deeming it a highly important element of worship. He believed in making worship attractive to the masses of the people, and was an advocate of improved church architecture and general arrangement. It was through him that the wretched rule that sent a man into the church by one door and his wife by another was first broken into at Fifth Street, albeit the aisle was still permitted to separate them when seated.

Mr. Rusling, although always a poor man, was liberal-hearted and charitable. He may be said to have been

THE FOSTER-FATHER OF ABEL STEVENS,

the celebrated "boy preacher" of the olden time. While stationed at St. John's some of the ladies of the congregation, in their visits of mercy, came across Mrs. Stevens, who was struggling with the world to gain a subsistence and rear her several small children. Among these was Abel, who was working in the old Globe

Mill as a "piecer" on a spinning-mule, for which he received probably a dollar or a dollar and a half a week. He was a bright and intelligent boy, and Rusling's attention having been called to him he at once took an interest in his welfare. Mr. Rusling was in the habit of keeping on hand, besides his own publications, some such books as might be wanted by members of his congregation, or for Sunday-school purposes, selling them and appropriating such profit as might be realized to objects of charity. He had at the period now under review a small bookstore at his house on Fourth Street, below Race,—which, by the way, formed the nucleus of the very respectable establishment now known as the "Methodist Book Concern," on Arch Street, west of Tenth,—and discovering, as he thought, in the boy Stevens the germs of intellect and ability, he took charge of and made him a store boy. This little bookstore, however, was, not very long after, moved down in front of "the Academy," and arrangements were made for the education of Abel for the ministry. Mr. Jacob Carrigan, Mr. John Wilmer, and Mr. Richard Benson, with, perhaps, one or two other Academy members, made themselves responsible for a portion of the boy's expenses, while Rusling, we are informed, took charge of his education, and when Dickinson College came into possession of the Methodists, sent him there for a year before he entered regularly into the ministry by joining the New England Conference.

AS A PREACHER

Rusling was what we would term didactic, or doctrinal. His power of reasoning was great, and he was engaging and persuasive, leading his hearers by such pleasing methods and arrangement of his discourse as rendered him not only attractive but popular wherever he was stationed. As we remember him, there was no affectation of oratory about him. He dealt but sparingly with tropes, metaphors, and such rhetorical figures as are by many men called to their aid. His great reliance was on the promises of the Gospels, which he always presented with marked effect, and his voice and gesture were unexceptionable. But few men in the Conference surpassed him as a camp-meeting preacher, and his harvest of souls was an abundant one.

He had a younger brother, Sedgwick, who was also a preacher, connected with the New Jersey Conference after its establishment. Sedgwick at one time in the course of his ministry became despondent and discouraged, and, looking up his elder brother, he said, "Josie, I think I'll give up preaching and go at something else." "Give up!" said Joseph; "why? what for? What's the matter, Sedgy?" "Well," said the younger brother, "I don't see that I am doing any good; I don't know of a soul that has been converted under my preaching." "You don't?" said Joseph; "well, I do, brother Sedge, —for, only a few weeks ago, I met a lady who told me she had been awakened and converted under your preaching." "That's enough, then," said Sedgwick;

"I've been preaching about seven years, and I'll preach seven more to gain another soul to Christ!" And so he went forth again, and in after-years could count the sheaves in his harvest not by scores but by many hundreds.

Mr. Rusling is claimed by the Methodists of New Castle, Delaware, as the father of their church. His last effective relation was on the Wilmington district, which embraced that city; and, having contracted disease some years previously from a severe cold, which resulted in consumption, he was in 1836 placed on the superannuated list in connection with his much-loved Fifth Street Church, and in 1839 his spirit winged its way to the presence of the Master whose cause he had so well served. His end was peace; his exit calm. And, repeating one of his own stanzas, we may say of him, as he wrote of McComb,—

> "How is the Lord's anointed slain!
> Numbered with the illustrious dead;
> He did unto the Mount repair,
> And Heaven came down and met him there."

CHAPTER XIX.

The Itinerancy.

THERE are various opinions current as to the effect of what we term "the progress of the age" in its relations to religion. This is an advanced and advancing century, and the word "progress" has now a much more comprehensive meaning than when adopted to express the simple act of moving forward or upward or downward. As understood in the present highly-utilitarian age, it means improvement in art, in science, in mechanics, in war, and in all the agencies that can contribute to the accumulation of wealth and power. It means, too, the adoption of style, the growth of new and, we venture to say, in a large degree vitiated tastes, the appropriation of luxurious living, and an added charm to the masses of society for the so-called pleasures of earth, and it would be strange, therefore, if it were not absorptive in a most positive degree. But we may perhaps be assisted in our definition of the word if we quote from Ford's "Broken Heart," where he says:

> "Let me wipe off this honorable dew,
> Although the popular blast
> Hath reared thy name up to bestride a cloud,
> Or *progress* in the chariot of the sun."

And it is with this understanding of the term, and in presence of the vast progress of which we are in the habit of boasting, that men are quietly discussing the proposition which we have stated.

We would err if we assumed that there is any less of the *appearance* or profession of religion now than of yore. It is respectable and in a large degree fashionable to be considered religious, even though one should be connected with the once-despised Methodist Church; besides which, the law of the land requires that we should, in a certain sense, believe ourselves to be religious. But the inquiry to which we have referred is also, like the term which we have been considering, of much wider scope than the simple word would seem to suggest. It is as to genuine vital Christianity, for which Mr. Wesley and the Methodists of the olden time contended, and in search of and to promulgate which he left the Established Church in which he had been reared. According to the most comprehensive definition of the word, every man who believes in the existence of God, in the revelation of His will to man, and in man's obligation to obey the will of God and keep His commandments, is religious. In China, where the worship is of idols, belief in and conformity to the doctrines of Confucius is religion; in Utah, God and the Book of Mormon, polygamy included, is religion; while in Turkey it is God and Mahomet, his prophet; but what people here are inquiring about is absolute godliness, and the genuine piety that prefers one to walk with Christ rather than the world.

These thoughts crowd upon us when considering the subject of

THE ITINERANCY

as a specialty in Methodism, of which a good many of the brethren are tiring. A denominational journal, published in New York, not long since contained an article somewhat severely criticising this particular feature, and in fact demanding its abolition or modification in so far as concerns the metropolitan churches. It was not, however, a Methodist publication, and it may be, therefore, that its censoriousness was altogether gratuitous; but inasmuch as it affected to represent some Methodist sentiment, and referred to a circumstance by way of illustration, it is worth while to repeat the incident.

A New York Methodist, who is said to occupy a "high position in commercial circles," lost a greatly-beloved daughter, ten or twelve years of age. After she was buried he said to a friend, "I am sick of Methodism." "Why?" was the question. "Because it gave me no pastor for my child. The one whom my daughter had learned to know best was gone to a distant city in another Conference. I sent for him and had him come to her. Our present minister she knew but little of, and I did not care, for I knew that soon he would be sent away and another stranger would come in his place. I think," he added, "I shall go over to Dr. Hall's Church. I can have a feeling of permanency in that Church which I cannot have in the Methodist."

Old John Street Church, New York City.

It is scarcely within the design of these sketches to criticise the position of this brother, and we have narrated the circumstance simply as an illustration. We may, however, propound the query, What has the itinerancy done for Methodism? or, better, What has it not done? We venture to assert that without the operation, influence, and power of the itinerancy during the century that has lapsed since its origination by Mr. Wesley, Methodism ere this would have proved an abortion. As well might a farmer sit under his porch all day gazing at the heavens, from the rising to the setting of the sun, and expect anything else than a crop of weeds, as to have undertaken the establishment of Methodism without the work of itinerant preachers. By these only could the ground have been prepared for cultivation; by them only could the seed of Gospel truth have been sowed broadcast among all the people; and by the itinerant preaching of Methodism only could be gathered such a harvest as has been stored away, not only in the granaries of the Church on earth, but in Heaven.

There are no doubt many Methodists, especially in the large cities, who sympathize in sentiment with the New York brother to whose case we have referred. To such the system which requires the preacher to be alternated at the end of every three years presents two marked objections. These are, first, the necessity for receiving and tolerating, even for so long as the stipulated period, a minister of ordinary, or, perhaps, very poor, qualifications; second, the severance from one who responds to all the requirements that go to make

up the graceful, pleasing, and popular preacher. But do not such as argue against the itinerancy see that they are really falling away from, and arguing against, Methodism itself? Suppose they would pause for a moment, and mark the steps of that progress with which we introduced this chapter. Let them glance back at the old church of St. George, with its barren walls and board benches, and then to the palatial establishments at Broad and Arch, and Spring Garden and Twentieth Streets, and as they sit in the luxuriously-cushioned seats, listening to the pealing notes of the organ, ask themselves if this is the Methodism of Wesley, of Fletcher, of Asbury, of Jesse Lee, of Freeborn Garretson, of Henry Boehm, of Ezekiel Cooper, Abbott, Webster, Owings, and the great army of the dead who were converted to God under the itinerant preachers who posted from village to village, from county to county, and state to state, bearing with them blessings and a free salvation to the lost world of mankind. Certainly, we must confess that the itinerant system has its disadvantages; but, then, what situation in life is there that is exempt therefrom? It must be conceded, too, that there are preachers that are improperly or unfortunately assigned, and who injure, and in some cases measurably break down, the society to which they are sent, but this is a remediable circumstance; besides which, it is one that other denominations that do not itinerate are at times subjected to.

A CASE IN POINT

occurs to us as now existing in Saratoga, New York, with a Presbyterian society. The pastor had been in charge for several years, and it was felt that the society was weakening under his ministrations, and "the official members," as we term them, put their heads together to see what could be done about it. They didn't want to dismiss him summarily, and yet they didn't want to keep him, and so an extremely bright idea took possession of the brethren,—they would reduce his salary a thousand dollars a year; and this they did, and the preacher, having a proper conception of the shrinkage processes which had been going on since the close of the war, considered the act a perfectly legitimate one, and continued his preaching, doing the best he could for another year. But this was not what the brethren intended, and so, being no better satisfied at the end of the following year, they determined to give the screw another turn, and resolved on a further reduction of a thousand dollars, which brought the poor man's salary down to fifteen hundred dollars a year; and, good-natured soul that he is, he seems to be in utter ignorance of the cause of this fit of economy on the part of the official members, and still "sticks." Now, if the Presbyterians had the Methodist system of itinerating in operation, this brother would, doubtless, be doing effective work on a circuit where the people might like him well enough.

THE ORIGIN OF THE ITINERANCY SYSTEM

is, without doubt, due to Whitefield, albeit that great preacher was never connected with a Methodist Conference.* It was he, however, who, although but just

* Whitefield differed from Mr. Wesley in reference to doctrinal points, and for a time their line so diverged as that the relations which had at first existed between them were greatly disturbed; but the friendship of these two great reformers was subsequently re-established on a firm and enduring basis, each maintaining his own peculiar belief. Mr. Wesley held to the Armenian view which forms the basis of the Methodist doctrine, while Whitefield adopted and held to the Calvinistic or Augustinian view; and, as many readers may not understand or appreciate the point at which these two great men diverged, we state the Calvinistic doctrine.

It asserts "predestination" to be "the eternal decree of God, by which he hath determined in himself what he would have to become of every individual of mankind, for they are not all created with a similar destiny; but eternal life is foreordained for some, and eternal damnation for others. Every man, therefore, being created for one or the other of these ends, we say he is predestinated either to life or death. We affirm that this counsel, so far as it concerns the elect, is founded on his gratuitous mercy, totally irrespective of human merit; but that of those whom he devotes to condemnation the gate of life is closed by a just and irreprehensible but incomprehensible judgment."

Calvin denies, however, that his doctrine makes God the author of sin. He says, "Their perdition depends on the divine predestination in such a manner that the cause and matter of it are found in themselves. For the first man fell because the Lord had determined it should so happen. The reason of this determination is unknown to us. Man, therefore, falls according to the appointment of Divine Providence, but he falls by his own fault."

Mr. Bancroft says, "The *political* character of Calvinism,

ordained by the Established Church, first went out into the highways and the fields to preach Christ and Him crucified, calling sinners to repentance. It was in 1739 that, clutching the banner of the cross and bearing it aloft, Mr. Whitefield began his campaign in the open air, preaching at first to the colliers and such others as gathered at Kingswood, shortly after which, in the same year, he made his second visit to America, and preached to vast crowds from the Hudson River to the Gulf.

The first appearance of "circuits" in connection with English Methodism was in 1746, when there were seven. In 1770 the number was sixty, *America being one of them.* The number of circuits now in Great Britain is nearly seven hundred, and even in the cities this arrangement of the work is still preserved, several of the principal churches being embraced in a circuit.

The first itinerant preacher in Ireland was Thomas Williams, who began work there in 1747, being followed shortly (within the same year) by Mr. Wesley, who found two hundred and eighty members in connection. Mr. Charles Wesley followed in a short time after his brother, and purchased the first preaching-house the Irish Methodists had, which was at a place

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which, with one consent, and with instinctive judgment, the monarchs of that day feared as republicanism, and which Charles II. declared 'a religion unfit for a gentleman,' is expressed in a single word,—Predestination;" and he adds, "To advance intellectual freedom Calvinism absolutely denied the sacrament of ordination, thus breaking up the monopoly of priestcraft, and scattering the ranks of superstition."

called "Dolphin's Barn," in the city of Dublin. Charles Wesley went, after this, to Cork, where he had for awhile a rather rough experience, and was arrested as a disturber of the peace. A bill of indictment was found against him, in which he was charged in the usual technical terms as "a person of ill fame, a vagabond, and a common disturber of His Majesty's peace." In that city the term "swaddlers" was applied to the Methodists, a nickname that grew out of a text used by one of the preachers, namely, "Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger."

The itinerancy was inaugurated in Limerick by Robert Swindell, in 1789, and not long after that date circuits were established in the various localities in Ireland where the preaching had been introduced, and at the death of Mr. Wesley, in 1791, there were seventy-five preachers travelling the Irish circuits, with a membership of about fifteen thousand.

IN AMERICA

the itinerancy was of course coeval with the introduction of Methodism. It was the germ, the root, as it has been since the tree itself; and when it shall no longer exist the great fabric of Methodism, whose colossal proportions now tower up toward heaven, will crumble and decay. We do not undertake to say that the modification or abandonment of the itinerancy would produce what is pathologically known as "shock," which results in death, but it would put an end to its progress, a circumstance that would necessarily produce decay.

The itinerancy is not only the supply-pipe of Methodism, but the great generating-furnace. It is the propelling power as well as the sheet-anchor of the Church. Through it nearly three million souls are to-day recorded as ranged under its banner in the United States alone. Its condition, its comforts, its wealth, and its humanizing agencies have increased in degrees that are commensurate to the progress of which we have spoken. If it does not dominate all other Protestant relations, it excels in numbers any one of them, and the approximations of the last two or three decades of time are suggestive of its eventually excelling in numbers the aggregate Protestant membership of the country; and to the itinerancy is this magnificent result due. What a light has been thrown into the darkened places of the land by the Methodist travelling preacher as he wended his way over the circuit! and how many, oh, how many thousand thirsting hearts have been refreshed by his periodical visits! We have heard Mr. Rusling say that during his first year, when on the Hamburg (New Jersey) circuit, the people would frequently follow him from one preaching-place to another. Taking their homely lunch-basket in hand, a little company would follow the tracks of his horse, coming up with him some hours after he had reached the next station, and, remaining there until he had preached and was ready to move forward again, they would retrace their way to the humble home in the forest that was made glad by the inspiration derived from the preacher. Bishop Simpson, in his Cyclopædia, referring to the itine-

rancy says, "It does not claim for its peculiar order a direct Divine sanction, and yet it does claim that it follows essentially the example of Christ and of his Apostles; and no one of them, for any considerable time, remained in charge of a single congregation or preached to the same people. It is difficult to understand how the command, 'Go into all the world and preach my Gospel to every creature,' could be successfully carried out unless an itinerant system were to be some time adopted," and Mr. Wesley claimed that long experience had proved that "a frequent exchange of teachers is best." "This preacher," said he, "has one talent, that another; no one whom I have ever yet known has all the talents which are needful for beginning, continuing, and perfecting the work of grace in a whole congregation." We should regret very much to feel that there was any great danger of a change in this system. True, as has hitherto been stated, Methodism in the cities is vastly different from what it was aforetime,—not in doctrine; we hope not in vitality; but in style and appreciation certainly.

Rev. J. B. Finley narrates an incident in the career of Asbury which indicated his fear in this regard, and it is given as referring to a possible contingency of a future "generation of Methodists." The bishop, in company with Rev. J. W. Bond, attended a camp-meeting in Ohio in 1814, and the latter gentleman desiring to visit some friends at Urbana, insisted on the bishop's accompanying him, and having preached there with great effect and results, the two gentlemen pro-

ceeded to Springfield. They stopped in that town with a Methodist family, and as they passed into the parlor they found the daughter with some young friends, all gayly dressed, at the piano. "The bishop took a seat, and directly the father and mother of the young lady came in, and then followed the grandfather and grandmother. When the bishop took the hand of the old lady he held it, and, looking her in the face, while a tear dropped from his eye, he said, 'I was looking to see if I could trace in the lineaments of your face the likeness of your sainted mother. She belonged to the first generation of Methodists. She lived a holy life, and died a most triumphant death. You,' continued the bishop, 'belong to the second generation of Methodists; your son and his wife are the third; and that young girl, your granddaughter, represents the fourth. She has learned to dress, and play on the piano, and is versed in all the arts of fashionable life, and, I presume, at this rate of progress, the *fifth* generation of Methodists will be sent to a dancing-school.'" This reproof is said to have made a profound impression, but if the old campaigner could now come back to earth and mingle among the fashionable Methodists of the *seventh* generation, he would probably conclude that even a dancing-school is preferable to some of the haunts visited by those who *profess* to be of the Church of God. But such we, in justice, perhaps, ought to say, with Shakspeare, are—

> "Like a villain with a smiling face,
> A goodly apple, rotten at the core."

CHAPTER XX.

Camp-Meetings.

MANY persons have affected to believe, and many yet indulge the hope, that the establishment founded by Wesley will be the great Church of the future. That there is apparently ground on which to base such an expectation may not be doubted. The simplicity of its doctrines, their close connection with the life and teachings of Christ, their adaptation to all conditions of life, and the close relation they would seem to establish between the Creator and the creature, man, gives to Methodism such claims to universal recognition as that one might well hope for its acceptance by all nations and all peoples as the chosen tabernacle of the Most High, and yet, in the light of what we term the world's "progress," we may well doubt if a universality of doctrine will ever be reached. We have heard it stated from the pulpit that there will be no great Church of the future. Of course the declaration was made as an opinion or belief; but it was not wildly uttered, nor left without a measure of proof drawn from Holy Writ with which to sustain it. The tendency of the world for many years past has been to what is termed latitudinarianism, not only in theology, but in morals, in politics, and in all else that concerns the ordering and

regulation of society; but however it may be as to the Church of the future, it is certain that the impress of Methodism will constitute the most important factor of Protestantism in the coming centuries.

Among the very important agencies in promoting the establishment of the Methodist Church and spreading its doctrines has been

THE CAMP-MEETING,

which, however, was, for a good many years, greatly misunderstood by the general public. Bishop Simpson, in his Cyclopædia, says the first camp-meeting was held in the summer of 1799, on the banks of the Red River, in Kentucky, and thus gives the origin of it: "At a sacramental occasion, held by the Presbyterian Church, sermons were delivered by both Presbyterians and Methodists, and such remarkable effects followed as produced extensive public excitement. The congregation was sometimes melted to tears of sorrow, and then gave utterance to shouts of joy. People came from surrounding sections of country to witness and attend the meeting. The house being too small to contain them, a stand was erected in the grove, and people came in wagons, bringing with them their provisions and clothing, to remain a few days upon the ground. The success of this meeting led to others, in which Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists participated, and from this union of the denominations they were called 'general meetings.'" This union of effort, however, does not seem to have continued long, as a very decided

opposition to them sprung up among the Presbyterians and Baptists, who very shortly abandoned all connection with such meetings, and left the field to be occupied exclusively by the Methodists.

Rev. Henry Boehm, the contemporary, friend, and often-time companion of Asbury in his itinerancy as bishop, in his "Reminiscences," says that "camp-meetings had their origin in Tennessee in 1799," the same year as mentioned by Bishop Simpson. Boehm's statement is that "two brothers named Magee, one a Methodist and the other a Presbyterian minister, had the high honor of originating them," and he adds that he was well acquainted with John Magee, and heard him preach, and that he travelled many miles with him. It is probable that Boehm's statement is the more accurate of the two, because he was, to an extent, at least, personally cognizant of the facts; although it may be that both have reference to the same meeting, yet locating it in different States, or, possibly, camp-meetings were held in both States during the summer of the same year.

A few years later camp-meetings were introduced east of the mountains. Mr. Thatcher held what is understood to be the first camp-meeting in the East at Carmel, New York, in 1804, and in 1805 Jesse Lee organized one in a grove near where the town of Smyrna, Delaware, now stands, where, it is said, "there were multitudes of tents and thousands came to the feasts of tabernacles." The preachers at this meeting were, besides Mr. Lee, John Chalmers, Joseph Totten, Thomas Ware, James Aitkins, Richard Lyons, William Bishop,

Ephraim Chambers, and Richard Sneath ; and Mr. Lee, in his account of it, says that "about two hundred were converted among the whites and many among the blacks." The camp-meetings of the present day are very different from those of the olden time. Like the churches, they have improved, not only in style, but in architecture, strange as may seem the application of that term to a meeting in the woods. In many localities the primitive character of the camp-meeting is still continued, the persons attending bringing with them not only their provisions and clothing, but their canvas tents. At Ocean Grove, however, Martha's Vineyard, and some other localities, camp-meeting towns have been built, with tents of boards and elaborately constructed cottages, and chapels in which the people worship when the weather is too inclement to hold service on the ground and in the open air.

LORENZO DOW,

whom many of our readers will doubtless remember, not only as a most eccentric but unique preacher of Methodism, undertook to introduce camp-meetings in England, at the beginning of the present century, and for a time succeeded, but they have not attained to any marked degree of popularity there. It was in fact not long after Dow begun his efforts that a spirit of determined hostility to such meetings was developed, and, the matter being brought up before the Wesleyan Conference, resolutions were passed declaring its judgment that, "even supposing such meetings to be allowable in

America, they are highly improper in England, and likely to be productive of considerable mischief," and the Conference further resolved that "we disclaim any connection with them." This action need not surprise us, for it is entirely consistent with the more conservative notions that prevail in England, not only in reference to church matters, but all else. It was the same sentiment, to which we have had occasion to refer heretofore, that held Mr. Wesley back for a time, the traditions of the "Established Church" having an influence in England that was never manifested, or indeed at all felt, among American Methodists. But Dow persevered in his efforts, and a number of the societies persisted in holding and attending camp-meetings, despite the utterance of the Conference, and out of its effort to control the matter grew a secession. Certain members who had been active in holding and attending camp-meetings were subjected to the discipline, and these, with such as sympathized with them, organized what has been since known as "Primitive Methodism." This is a denomination that has not been known to any very considerable extent in this country, but we have nevertheless seen companies of men and women so connected, in the interior of the State, marching along the highway singing hymns and praising God. Many persons in this country and in England considered

DOW A LUNATIC.

He was, certainly, a strange composition of human nature. He was "a Connecticut Yankee," born at

Coventry, in that State, in October, 1777. His anxiety on the subject of religion began when he was but fourteen years of age. He appears to have been from boyhood a dreamer, and was greatly troubled in early life by strange visions while sleeping, many of which are recorded in his journal. So greatly was he agitated and distressed for a time by these dreams and visions, as he tells us, that he frequently debated in his mind whether or not it was best that he should take his own life, and on several occasions was on the point of doing so.* Previous to the beginning of the present century there were strange and ludicrously extravagant reports current in the section of country where he lived concerning the Methodists. It was said that they preached strange and heretical doctrines, and that they were a mischievous and dangerous people, and so highly colored was the nature of these rumors that the Methodists were supposed to look unlike other people. After a while, and while Dow was yet a lad, one of the preachers extended his tour into the heart of the great onion-growing State, and his appointment having been announced, the young dreamer was led by curiosity to go as far as the door of the meeting-house, with a view,

* On one occasion, when greatly distressed by conflicting views, he loaded a gun and repaired to the woods, fully determined, as he tells us, to end his sufferings by committing suicide. When he had gone some distance into the woods, he thought he heard a voice saying, "Stop! consider what you are about to do; if you end your life, you are undone forever." He paused, and a new train of thought predominating, he retraced his steps, returned to his home, and put away the gun.

not to hear, but merely to steal a glance at the uncouth new-comer, who, it was supposed, would turn the neighborhood topsy-turvy with his heresies. Finding the preacher to be like other men, and his doctrines conforming very much to his own speculations and beliefs, he followed the Methodists and was shortly converted, and at about the year 1796, after great mental anxiety and severe struggles with the enemy, and despite the protests of his family, he went forth to preach. In 1804 he married his wife, "Peggy," who accompanied him in most of his wanderings. Peggy seems to have been a woman after his own heart, and was a person of something more than ordinary mind. Dow was extremely eccentric. His appearance was grotesque. He wore his hair long like a woman, except that he didn't put it up, and his beard, when we last saw him, reached well-nigh down to his waist. His dress was conformable, plain as was possible, and generally quite seedy enough.* The last time we saw and heard him was when he preached in a little brick building on the south side of Christian Street, above Fourth, or, perhaps, Fifth, which was known as "Mount Zion." We think it belonged to Elder Plummer, and the society worshipping in it were called Plummerites, or Hard-Shell Baptists.

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* He declared that the practice of dressing in black by the ministers of most denominations was a perpetuation of one of the popish customs, which was taken from the false prophets, who borrowed it from the true prophets, who wore that color when mourning in sackcloth.

PEGGY DOW

was as plain as a pipe-stem, and was, without doubt, a valuable support to Lorenzo. She wrote "The Vicissitudes of Life," which was published with the journal of her husband, the two productions being given to the public under the title of "The Dealings of God, Man, and the Devil, as Exemplified in the Life, Experience, and Travels of Lorenzo Dow in a Period of Over Half a Century," etc., etc.

To say that the Dows were extraordinary people would be to use a feeble phraseology. Lorenzo was *sui generis*. He was a Methodist, but yet not recognized by them. He was at one time licensed to preach by the presiding elder, but was never, so far as we can learn, received into the Conference. His style of preaching was aggressive in the extreme, declamatory, and often bordering on recklessness. He was Quixotic. He travelled and preached from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, from the Atlantic coast to the Mississippi valley, and to England and Ireland, and in both countries very many professed conversion under his preaching. His hostility to the Church of Rome was unbounded, and his denunciations of the Sons of Loyola were really furious. He termed himself "the Cosmopolite," and he dubbed the advocates of Calvinism "a double L pastman," a phraseology which was original with himself, and meaningless, doubtless, to most others. He refused to submit to the discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and hence was an outsider; but

they encouraged him, nevertheless. There was no culture about his preaching. His biting sarcasm and bitter invective often brought him into trouble, but he always managed to find a way out, his adroitness and skill under such circumstances serving to give many ignorant persons an idea of something akin to supernatural power. When about leaving England on a certain occasion he was being hunted by officers of the law, who were in close pursuit of him on account of some charge that had been preferred against him, probably for disturbing the peace by his preaching on the streets. When he reached the dock it was found that an accident of some kind would detain the vessel on which he had taken passage for a few hours. Another vessel bound to America was just casting off her lines as he reached the wharf, and he stepped on board of her; and as she sailed away he could see the officers boarding the other ship. His career reminds us of Sue's Wandering Jew. He would make an appointment to be at a certain place three or six months in advance, and when everybody had forgotten it, by reason of having received no tidings of him afterward, he would drop down at the designated place and at the exact time appointed, as though he had been spilled out from a passing cloud. Time and space seemed as nothing to him, and, although of frail constitution, his power to endure hardship was most extraordinary. One of his printed sermons, which we have seen, is entitled "How to Curse and Swear, Lie, Cheat, and Kill, according to Law." In 1821 he was arrested in Charleston, South

Carolina, on a charge of libelling Rev. Wm. Hammett, pastor of a Primitive Methodist Church in that city.* The trial lasted for several days, and he was finally convicted, although Mr. Hammett had died meanwhile; and the Court, in consideration of the punishment he had endured by being some time in prison, and the cost he had been at, sentenced him to pay a fine of one dollar, the cost of prosecution, and undergo an imprisonment of twenty-four hours in the county jail. He died at Washington, in February, 1834, where he went for the purpose of endeavoring to arouse the government to some action against what he believed to be the unlawful and dangerous machinations of the Romish Church. Strange, strange, incomprehensible creature was Dow.

* This was a curious and quite a novel case. Mr. Hammett had been a preacher connected with the Methodist Episcopal Church, and at about the time of O'Kelley's defection he also seceded, and with the aid of some other preachers established several societies of Primitive Methodists. Some years subsequently he died, and Dow, without any personal knowledge as to the facts, but from hearsay, stated in one of his books or pamphlets that he was in the habit of issuing that Mr. Hammett had died drunk. It was some years after the death of Mr. Hammett that the eccentric preacher again visited the Palmetto State, when he was arrested and, as before mentioned, tried and convicted for libel or defamation of character. The trial attracted much attention at the time, the Commonwealth and the defendant being both ably represented, and Dow made a lengthy address to the Court himself. Laymen argued that there could be no libel of a dead man, but the law said it was a crime against the State, and that the party against whom the libel was uttered would be only a witness if living. Dow paid the fine; the costs were remitted by the officers; and the governor of the State pardoned him on the same day.

CHAPTER XXI.

Asbury on Church Location.

EARNEST as was the good Asbury in his advocacy of plainness and simplicity in all things, he was nevertheless extremely practical concerning the selection of means for promoting the cause in which he was engaged. As to churches, while he preferred that they should be perfectly plain, he insisted that they be placed in eligible and prominent positions, so that not only might they be easy of access, but inviting to their entrance. He complained that many of the first houses of worship were difficult of access, and, conversing on this subject, he said, "Some benevolent man would give us a site, the ground being so poor you could not raise mullein stalks on it, and we would thank him and erect a house upon it where the people would be sure not to find it. Perhaps the donor's object might be pure benevolence or," he added with a quiet sarcasm, "to keep the Methodists out of the village; other denominations," he said, "knew better, and have pursued a wiser course." And then, referring to the Episcopal churches, he said, "How prominent are they,—not in lanes or by-streets, but in the most public places;" and, concluding his remarks on this subject, he added, "I tell you what it is: if we wish to catch fish, we must go where they are, or

where they are likely to come. We had better pay money for a site in a central position in a city, town, or village, than have them give us half a dozen lots for nothing in some by-street or lane." It is very manifest that our Methodist friends have acted on this advice, and that they have greatly improved upon it in so far as the character of their buildings is concerned. When the present "Union" church was built (then considered the finest in the country belonging to the denomination), at a leaders' meeting held just previous to its completion the following preamble and resolutions were submitted and voted on:

"As, in addition to the numerous mercies with which God has favored us as a society, we have the prospect of obtaining a commodious and convenient house of worship, and as this meeting deem it of importance that plainness, simplicity, and uniformity may be observed therein, they resolve,

"First. That in our opinion no individual or individuals should at any time place or cause to be placed in the church cushions of any kind.

"Second. That no cushion should be placed in the pulpit for any purpose.

"Third. That no instrumental music shall be introduced into the church at any time.

"Fourth. That the above be submitted to our brethren, the trustees, for their concurrence."

This was too much for the spirit of improvement of even that period, say forty-six years ago, and the yeas and nays being called for on the first resolution the yeas

were but four, while there were eight votes in the negative, and so further effort to restrict the brethren in this regard was at once abandoned. Whether the cushions have been since introduced or not we are unable to say, but it is certain that the sonorous tones of a very fine organ are regularly enjoyed by those who worship in that beautiful temple of Methodism.

The years that marked the close of the three first decades of the present century were fruitful of the extension of Philadelphia Methodism. We do not notice that there were any special "revivals" of religion, but the period was certainly characterized by an increased development of enterprise in providing the means for public worship. For some years previous to 1830 "West Philadelphia" was but a sparsely-settled neighborhood, and the few Methodists that resided there were either obliged to trudge their way pretty well down town on the eastern side of the river to enjoy preaching, or put up with such occasional favors as were meted out in a small school-house building by preachers from the Chester circuit. At this time the population of that now magnificent portion of Philadelphia was mainly confined to two streets, or rather "roads," as they were termed, the West Chester Road, now Market Street, and the Lancaster Turnpike, now Lancaster Avenue, and there was no Methodist society organization. As early as 1827 three members of the old Academy congregation moved to West Philadelphia with their families, and they formed a class, gathering the few scattered

sheep they could find into it, but nothing more was accomplished, except to obtain, as before remarked, preaching at intervals in the school-house; but in 1829 or 1830, Mr. John Buckman, another member of the Academy, and a gentleman of means, purchased the property on which the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane now stands, and removed his family thereto. Mr. Buckman at once realized the need of church accommodations on the west side, and with great promptness he set to work to supply the want. He was not only a man of means but of enterprise, and, as that was a characteristic of the Academy people, he soon found enough of them to join him in the work. It was during the pastorate of Mr. Higgins, whose name alone was an inspiration, and very shortly after removing to his rural home, Mr. Buckman succeeded in organizing a new church movement, forming a new society with a board of trustees made up from Academy members and those of one or two of the other churches.

There was plenty of vacant ground for sale in West Philadelphia in those days, and it could be bought very cheaply, and shortly after the new board had been organized a lot was purchased fronting on an intermediate thoroughfare, now known as Ludlow Street, and forthwith the work of erecting a new church edifice was begun. The new society, which is entitled to the distinction of being the Mother Church of the Twenty-fourth and Twenty-seventh Wards, was entitled

ASBURY METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH,

and its usefulness and progress have been commensurate with the spirit which it must have derived from its immediate ancestry. The new church was completed and dedicated within the year 1830, and the society will doubtless celebrate its Semi-Centennial Anniversary during the coming year (1880). The lot on which the old church was constructed was a large one, extending south to the line of Chestnut Street as since laid out and opened, and, the congregation having largely increased within the first twenty years of its existence, the church was rebuilt in 1850, with its front facing on Chestnut Street.

In 1831, while Mr. Cookman was in charge at St. George's, a missionary spirit of enterprise was developed among the Ebenezer people. At this period the irregular street which skirted the head of the wharves in the old Southwark district was a popular Sunday resort for large numbers of workingmen—a sort of loitering promenade—to which very many respectable men were drawn to enjoy the river breeze and view the craft that floated on its bosom. Fishing from the wharves and rowing and sailing boats about the harbor were indulged in to a considerable extent, and "Kaighn's Point," on the Jersey side, being a place of popular resort for pleasure on the Sabbath, very many persons were attracted to the old South Street Ferry. From that point and above, down to the Navy Yard, was a strolling ground for the sailors, who made frequent visits to the

groggeries that were met with all along the shore, but in the immediate vicinity of South and Shippen (now Bainbridge) Streets were some vile dens of profligacy and drunkenness. On Shippen Street, east of Front, was a celebrated dance-house known in those days as "Dandy Hall," into which the sailors were inveigled, made drunk, and generally robbed of what money they had. Quarrelling and fighting were common to this neighborhood, if such we may term it, and some of the young men of Ebenezer were led to look upon this ground as a good field for missionary effort, and on a certain Sabbath they met at the head of the wharves, between South and Shippen Streets, to begin operations, and determined to make a raid on what they had good reason to consider

THE DEVIL'S STAMPING GROUND;

and gathering some stones they piled them together and placing on them the "dish" of a huge pair of scales a preaching-stand was improvised. A small crowd, attracted by the novelty of the proceeding, gathered immediately, when hundreds came running to the spot in expectation of witnessing a fight.

We do not know who it was that braved the lion in his den as preacher at the first of these meetings, but we remember that "'Squire" John S. Bundick, who still lives, at the age of more than fourscore years, and dispenses "Jersey justice" in South Camden, raised the hymn. The movement was followed up on the next Sabbath, when Mr. Cookman occupied the stand. It

is not difficult to imagine the effect of a sermon under such circumstances by that great preacher. He was a wonderful man as a pulpit orator, and, with a pile of stones for a pedestal on which to plant his feet and the heavens for a sounding board to his pulpit, he was, of all others, the man of his day to startle to conviction such a motley mass as was likely to be drawn together at such a locality and under such circumstances. Mr. Cookman selected his text from Isaiah iv. 1: "And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach." Following upon the open-air movement, a sail-loft was obtained on the wharf somewhere between the two streets already mentioned, and on the Fourth of July a number of the young men who began the movement were engaged with saws and planes making seats for their homely temple, and here they hung out the Bethel flag of the house of God. Simultaneously with the renting of the sail-loft a new society was organized, and the offspring of Old Ebenezer was given the name of

THE MARINERS' BETHEL.

We are not able to say precisely how long the new society continued to worship in the loft, but at some time subsequently they obtained a house on Shippen Street that had been used for a dwelling, and making such alterations as were needful they occupied it until the year 1845, when a very neat and substantial church

edifice was constructed on the corner of Shippen and Penn Streets. The situation here must have been somewhat anomalous, not to say dramatic, in the olden time. The sounds of drunken revelry would float out from "Dandy Hall" into the house of God, and the prayers of the Christian band must necessarily have invaded this haunt of vice and sin. Especially must this have been so before the building of the new church edifice, but a better civilization has since obtained in that once desecrated neighborhood, and to-day the church building of 1845, deserted, stands alone, looking up, as it were, in mute desolation upon one of the mammoth manufacturing establishments of the city. But change is everywhere—

> "On the forest's leafy pride,
> On the streamlet, glancing bright,
> On the jewell'd crown of night."

And so during the year 1873 the brethren of Bethel began to consider whether or not there was a necessity for enlarging their field of work and getting into a locality that would afford better scope for their enterprise. This question was finally determined in the affirmative, and during the year 1874 they commenced and completed their present house of worship on Washington Street, above Second. It is an unusually fine and very large church edifice, constructed of hard gray stone, with a neat and tasteful parsonage adjoining, of the same material, and we are glad to learn, as we do from the present pastor, Rev. J. W. Langley, that the society is in a most flourishing condition, with a very large mem-

bership. For several years after the organization of this society it appeared on the Conference record as the "Southwark mission," and was supplied with preaching from St. George's charge. In 1835, when one hundred and fifty-eight members were reported, Rev. D. W. Bartine was the pastor, and in 1836–37, Rev. John Woolson was in charge, and in 1838–40, Rev. Levin M. Prettyman being in charge, it was returned as the Mariners' Bethel, the membership in 1839 being stated at two hundred and twelve. The Mariners' Bethel is not much of a sailors' church now, although the wives of many seafaring men are members, and the young men of the society still maintain their interest in looking after "poor Jack" by going along the wharves on Sunday morning distributing tracts and inviting all who will, to come to Bethel and listen to the preaching of the Word. The older members of the society can refer to many interesting scenes and incidents of its history. There are, however, but few, very few, of the original members now left among us. Nearly half a century of time has been swallowed up in oblivion's murky waters since Cookman held forth to the greatly-mixed assemblage that heard him on Shippen Street wharf; and the only one of the pioneers in that movement whom we can now recall as wearing the habilaments of mortality is Mr. David H. Bowen, whose voice is still daily raised in prayer and thankfulness to the Giver of all Good for the lengthened years with which he has been blessed.

We have said that the period immediately following the close of the third decade of the present century was

marked by much enterprise in Methodism. It was in 1832 that Fifth Street Church was organized by Mr. Rusling, and in the same year, when the people were intensely alarmed on account of the appearance of the Asiatic cholera, that the brickyard movement which resulted in the establishment of the Western Methodist Episcopal Church was begun. In 1833, as has been already seen, St. Paul's was organized, and it was during the same year that the old Academy yielded to the march of progress and gave place to the present Union Methodist Episcopal church edifice, and within the same year Methodist churches were constructed in Manayunk and Frankford, then considered rural towns of the county.

CHAPTER XXII.

Rev. Charles Pitman.

"THE heart of a statesman," said Napoleon, "must be in his head," and the late David Paul Brown, quoting the remark in the "Forum," said, "We may be permitted to add, 'the head of an advocate must be in his heart.'" This may seem to some readers a contradiction, but it is not by any means so, for while the heart of a statesman may, figuratively speaking, be in his head, the head of an advocate or an orator may very well be in his heart; the idea, however, which the great Captain intended to express was, probably, that a statesman should have no heart, a condition which vast numbers of the people of the present day seem to have successfully reached. "The head without the heart," says the author of the "Forum," "if the comparison may be excused, is like a steam-engine without a boiler. Without the aid of the heart reason is cold, vapid, and comparatively worthless. The heart is the throne of the passions; 'tis there we rule, are ruled, and must be won." And thus is the spirit of Methodism, and what we may not inaptly term the unction of its preaching, illustrated. It is because the head of the preacher is in his heart that his reasoning faculties are brightened; that his power of language is stimulated, and that his

supplications to the throne of the ever-living God are heard and answered.

No man knew better the rule of heart-power than did David Paul Brown, and but few men of his own or any other time made more effective use of it as a forensic orator. It was from such a fountain that the utterances of the Apostle Paul flowed, when, in answer to the charge before the king that he was mad, he declared, "I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things." Said he, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest;" and then concluding that wonderful speech, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." In a very brief notice of the Rev. Charles Pitman, in Bishop Simpson's Cyclopædia, wherein, by the way, mention of the pioneer preachers of the olden time is rather conspicuous for its absence, the author says "multitudes hung upon his lips with delight, and were moved by his powerful appeals." Mr. Pitman was born in the neighborhood of Cookstown, New Jersey, in the year 1796, and was raised to farming pursuits. His education was about equal to that of the farmer boys of his time, but later in life he drank deeply of those everlasting springs by which the roots of the tree of universal knowledge are watered. He was converted early in life, and, developing much apparent promise as a speaker, he was licensed in 1815 by the Quarterly Meeting for the New Mills,

New Jersey, circuit, to exhort, and in March, 1817, he was licensed as a local preacher. In 1818, when about twenty-two years of age, he was admitted into the New Jersey Conference as an itinerant and appointed to Trenton. In 1819–20 he was at Bergen, and in 1821–22 at New Brunswick. In 1823–24 he was stationed at Bridgeton, after which he was appointed presiding elder for the West New Jersey district, and filled that position during the years 1826–29, and being then transferred to the East Jersey district, he occupied the same relation until and including the year 1832, when he was transferred to the Philadelphia Conference and stationed at Union Church, where he remained during 1833–34. In 1835 he was agent for Dickinson College, but entering again on active ministerial work, he was stationed at St. George's, where he was continued for two years. In 1838 he was at Eighth Street, and in 1839–40 again at Trenton. In 1841 he was appointed secretary of the Missionary Society and removed to New York; and, being subsequently re-elected from time to time, he filled that position with great acceptability and profit to the enterprise until the year 1850, when, his health failing rapidly, he was obliged to resign.

As we remember Mr. Pitman in the prime of life he was a gentleman of more than usually prepossessing appearance. Well formed, of good height, well dressed and of dignified deportment, he at once claimed recognition as a man of more than ordinary ability and acquirements. Dark of complexion, his hair and eyes

were coal-black, and his voice, which was both mellow and sonorous, was peculiarly adapted to pulpit oratory.

HIS MENTAL POWERS

were of a superior order, a fact which was perceptible at a glance. They were well balanced, too, and seemed to be within his control in an exceptional degree. His imaginative faculties were fine, and as a preacher of the Cross, for which he was greatly distinguished, he gave them such play as rendered his ministrations extremely effective. He illustrated most completely the idea of our old friend, David Paul Brown. Not only was Mr. Pitman's head in his heart, but every motion, every gesture, every impulse, seemed with him a heart emanation; and all who had the pleasure to hear him were made to feel that his every utterance was from the remotest recesses of the heart. He differed in a marked degree from many other Methodist preachers of his time. He was what we might term an orderly preacher, as compared with some others with whom we have met. He never ranted, nor could it hardly be said that he shouted, albeit he praised God many times with a loud voice. Earnest, zealous, and at times passionate, in his delivery, his bearing was ever marked by a profound sense of the solemnity of the occasion and the subject on which he dwelt. As a theologian he was logical and argumentative, and not at all abstruse. He was a good controversialist, although many believed that in his discussion with Barns, to which we referred incidentally in our sketch of that rather unique preacher, Mr. Pitman

failed to vanquish his antagonist. No man would consider him as what Burke termed a political theologian. His favorite theme was the doctrine of the Atonement, and he preached "Christ and Him crucified" with such startling power as often brought many hundreds to their knees.

Rev. James Ayres, general agent for the American Sunday-School Union for the Northwest, in a letter to the editor of Sprague's "American Pulpit," relates the following incident concerning his first meeting with Pitman: "I was passing through the streets of Bridgeton, New Jersey, one evening, when I heard at a distance a voice which sounded so sweetly that I was instinctively drawn in the direction of it. As I advanced I saw the door of a house ajar, the weather being warm, and I soon learned that a minister was leading a religious class in a private room. I listened, and such was the mellowness of his voice and the unction with which he spoke that I was perfectly entranced, and an impression was made upon my mind never to be effaced."

HIS POWER AS A PREACHER.

A most remarkable incident occurred on an occasion when Mr. Pitman was stationed at St. George's. We were not present, and may therefore narrate it imperfectly. The house was crowded to its utmost capacity, as was generally the case when he preached. His text was as follows: "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with

rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." The speaker had consumed more than half his usual time, and his sermon was drawing to a close, when suddenly he seemed wrapt in clouds and darkness and was unable to proceed, and, turning in the pulpit with his face to the wall, he fell upon his knees and broke forth in wrestling prayer with God for deliverance, and in an instant, as it were, there swept through the house and over the congregation a Divine influence and power such as had never before been witnessed in that church, and hundreds of the people fell upon their knees, crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" This incident, we are told, was followed by a wonderful revival at old St. George's, during which several hundred persons professed conversion.

Mr. Pitman was a methodical preacher, and arranged his sermons with great care, frequently writing them out, although never attempting to read them in public or to memorize them. His reason for this, as we have learned, was that he might thereby better impress the arrangement of his subject on his mind. He was a man of somewhat nervous temperament, and we should err greatly if we were to say that he was not ambitious. His ambition, however, was of a lofty character. He had his periods of elation, and was subject, like many other men, to occasional seasons of despondency. He was a good and fast friend, and, when in his best moods, genial and companionable. He was a close student and most industrious reader, and acquired during his life a very fine library. He was an earnest defender of the

doctrines and discipline of Methodism,—a fact that was illustrated by his effort to subject Mr. Barns to the latter. He despised anything like witticisms in the pulpit, and held in perfect contempt such conduct as is sometimes witnessed, and which will not be too strongly characterized by the term buffoonery. His manner everywhere and under all circumstances was that of a gentleman, and his style of preaching, while sufficiently demonstrative, was calm, impressive, and convincing. He relied greatly on the power of prayer, and believed that when supplemented by faith it would wellnigh remove mountains.

AS A BUSINESS MAN

he was earnest, methodical, and enterprising,—a fact which was fully appreciated by the General Conference when it successively elected him to the position of missionary secretary. He was extremely well fitted for that post,—his methodical habits, his love of order, and his earnest devotion to that cause rendered him particularly the right man in the right place, and it is generally conceded that the cause of missions was better promoted during his administration of the office than for years preceding.

Rev. John Kennedy, in a letter written subsequent to the death of Pitman, said of him: "His entire ministerial character was the subject of admiration with multitudes; and it has left an abiding impression, especially upon the Conference in the bosom of which he died. His more private deportment as a Christian was

in happy unison with his public position. Generous and sympathizing as a friend, and cherishing no resentment toward any, cheerful without levity, and affable without affectation, his whole life was a beautiful illustration of that blessed religion which it was his vocation to promote."

Whatever the skeptic may think or say, there is certainly something wonderfully startling about the working of Methodism and its operation on human kind. As we trace the history of its great men of the past, its orators and most successful preachers, we find them all coming from obscurity. Unlettered and uncultured in the beginning, as we meet them in life we find them displaying the graces and acquirements of the most careful training. The subject of this sketch, for instance, worked in his youth as a day laborer in the harvest-fields of Burlington County, and as we see him now before us in the pulpit, he presented in all things the appearance, culture, and ability of one of God's most noble works of human clay.

In 1850 Mr. Pitman's health began to decline to such an extent, as before remarked, that he was obliged to give up work, and he retired to the scene of many of his early triumphs over the enemy at Trenton, New Jersey. That State is greatly indebted to him for its progress in Methodism, and he was always extremely popular among its people, many of whom, knowing him personally, still live and hold

> "His very name a title-page, and next
> His life a commentary on the text."

CHAPTER XXIII.

Controversy to be discouraged.

Lord Bacon, in one of those admirable essays written during hours that were snatched from the multifarious pursuits in which he was engaged, discoursing on "Unity in Religion," said, "Of this I may give only this advice, according to my small model. Men ought to take heed of rending God's church by two kinds of controversies: the one is, when the matter of the point controverted is too small and light, not worth the heat and strife about it, kindled only by contradiction; for, as it is noted by one of the fathers, Christ's coat indeed had no seam, but the church's virtue was of divers colors, whereupon he saith, *In veste varietas sit, scissura not sit,** they be two things, unity and conformity; the other is, when the matter of the point controverted is great, but it is driven to an over-great subtility and obscurity, so that it becometh a thing rather ingenious than substantial." And he adds, "A man that is of judgment and understanding shall sometimes hear ignorant men differ, and know well within himself that those which so differ mean one thing, and

* "In the garment there may be many colors, but let there be no rending of it."

yet they themselves would never agree; and if it come so to pass in that distance of judgment, which is between man and man, shall we not think that God above, that knows the heart, doth not discern that frail men, in some of their contradictions, intend the same thing and accepteth of both?"

Such golden words are worthy to be studied and treasured in the hearts of all men, and especially should they be considered of by those who love the Lord and are striving to keep his commandments. There is neither time nor place for controversy in the church, albeit the perverseness of human nature is such that we sometimes find within it well enough meaning men who for the mere love of the thing

> "Will undertake to prove by force
> Of argument, a man's no horse."

The same author from whom we have quoted aptly remarks, that "men create oppositions which are not, and put them into new terms, so fixed as, whereas the meaning ought to govern the term, the term in effect governeth the meaning." It was for such that St. Paul intended the admonition, "Avoid profane and vain babblings and oppositions of science falsely so called." The good Bishop Asbury, when addressing, on a certain occasion, a class of young men who were studying for the ministry, said, "When you go into the pulpit go from your closets. Leave all your vain speculations and metaphysical reasoning behind. Take with you your hearts full of fresh spring-water from heaven, and

preach Christ crucified and the resurrection, and that will conquer the world." And, as indicating his dislike of controversy, on another occasion, at a conference meeting, he said of his brother, G. W. Bond, "he never rises to speak unless he has something to say." Such have been the successful preachers of Methodism; men who avoid controversy whenever possible, and who, grasping the cross of Christ with one arm, point aloft with the other to the glory and grandeur of the rest reserved for the great army of the redeemed, and, planting themselves on the promises of the eternal God of heaven and earth, preach a free salvation to all who will accept it and believe.

A preacher whom we remember as being very popular forty years ago, and very successful wherever stationed or on circuit, was

REV. HENRY G. KING,

who entered the ministry, "on trial," in the year 1819. Mr. King was a gentleman of fine appearance and presence, of rather large build, and possessing much physical strength, and, adhering closely to the provincial style of dress during his life, his appearance in the pulpit, as elsewhere, attracted marked attention. He wore his hair long and combed back from his forehead, and his single-breasted coat, with a standing collar, according to the cut of the Revolutionary period, rendered him in person a fitting representative of the American Methodist preacher of the olden time. His style of dress, however, was not an affectation, for he was wont to say

that it was the costume of his early days, and he did not think that a minister of the Gospel should alter the cut of his coat to conform it to the constantly-changing fashions of the day. Mr. King had been in the work as a local preacher for several years before entering the Conference as an itinerant, and when he did so he threw soul and body into the cause with such enthusiastic devotion as rendered him one of the most effective ministers of his times. He was a man of ardent temperament, sensitive and most kindly disposition; unselfish, and with a heart kind as a woman's. Forgetful of or ignoring all temporal interests, he gave himself up wholly to the work of his Master, refusing to receive more for his services than was absolutely necessary to his subsistence. It is related of him that, on one occasion, when stationed at the old Eighth Street Church, in Philadelphia, he returned to the stewards a part of his salary, saying that he had enough for his wants, and he knew that the church needed it for other purposes; and, as illustrating the sympathetic nature of the man, Rev. J. B. Hagany narrates the following incident:

On one of the streets of the city where he was stationed a worn-out horse had fallen under his burden and was in a dying condition. The animal belonged to the poor man who had been driving him, and with the cart and harness constituted his only property and means of livelihood. Mr. King coming along was attracted by the curious crowd that had gathered, and soon saw the owner of the beast weeping on account of

what to him was a great loss. For a moment the preacher paused, and then taking from his pocket a small book he wrote his name for a sum of money, and passing from one to another in the crowd and then into the neighboring houses, he in a short time gathered up and handed over to the poor fellow money enough to buy him another horse.

FROM THE FARM TO THE PULPIT.

Mr. King was of English origin, and was born in the county of Lancaster in the year 1792. His parents were highly respectable and religious persons, his mother a Presbyterian and his father an Episcopalian, and he was wont to say that next to the Methodists his attachments were all with the Presbyterians. His father was a farmer, and had served in the Revolutionary war, and was wounded at the battle of King's Mountain, or Cowpens, and the subject of our sketch worked on the farm with his father until he left it to enter the ministry. As was the case with so many of the early Methodist preachers, the education of Mr. King was limited to such instruction as was afforded by the common schools of the last century. He studied the ancient languages, however, after enlisting in the Gospel work, with Rev. William Mann. He was an unusually close and laborious Biblical student, and so familiar was he with the language of the Old and New Testaments that his ordinary conversation abounded in quotations from them. We would not class him as a preacher with Durbin, Cookman, or Maffitt, nor would we place

him in the category of "pulpit orators" of distinction. He had not studied the arts of elocution, but his rhetoric was such as is inspired from on High. His oratory was drawn from the poetry of the Bible, and his illustrations were derived from the familiar traditions of the Saviour. His preaching was of the vigorous style, and his name would draw a crowded house whenever and wherever announced. He dealt liberally in the thunders of the law, but was unfailing and most happy in his presentation of its promises. His style was bold, energetic, enthusiastic, and exciting, approximating at times, as some persons thought, to "ranting;"* he was "a shouting Methodist." But he was nevertheless dignified and reverent in the extreme, and would brook

* There were a number of anecdotes current during the ministerial career of Mr. King concerning what was considered by some persons as the extravagance of his style and action in the pulpit. One of these was to the effect that on a certain occasion he "jumped from the pulpit to the floor" of the auditorium,—a statement that probably originated from the fact that, missing a step when descending the very awkward stairways by which access was gained to the old-fashioned pulpits, he was obliged to scale several of them at a bound to prevent himself from falling. It should be observed, however, that in the early days of Methodism there were many persons much disposed to ridicule the preaching of its doctrines, and it is more than probable that a very slight circumstance, or even an accidental movement, would often be magnified into either a grave offence or an unpardonable indiscretion, and yet it must be admitted that a majority of the preachers of the olden time were good healthy shouters, and that their utterances were frequently supplemented by vigorous and highly demonstrative action.

nothing like levity concerning things Divine. But few men were equal to him in his day in devotion to his high calling, and his success in bringing souls to Christ was great. As a camp-meeting preacher he was in his element. A sermon preached by him on one of these occasions, at "Red Lion," was spoken of as so touching, and apparently inspired by the Holy Ghost, that the entire mass of people present, including the preachers, were affected to tears during the continuance of the sermon, which lasted for nearly two hours. It was under his preaching, while at different stations, that Rev. John A. Roach, now, we believe, in the New York Conference; Rev. Pennell Coomb, of Philadelphia; and Rev. Joseph Holditch, formerly secretary of the American Bible Society, were converted.

Mr. King's ministry extended over a period of nearly fifty years. His first circuit, after entering the Conference, was Dauphin, and in 1822 he was at St. George's, and again in 1824. In 1832–33 he was at St. John's, and in 1838–39 at the "Old Brick," in Kensington; after which he was stationed at Asbury, at Eighth Street, and at Frankford and Manayunk. He was extremely popular among the Kensington people, and during his pastorate at the "Old Brick" some ship-builders of that district named a very fine sea-going vessel after him. It was while connected with old St. George's charge that he married Harriet, daughter of John McMasters, of Philadelphia, and one of the oldest members of Ebenezer Church. The McMasters were among the very first of the Methodists in this country, the grand-

father of Mrs. King having been a preacher of its doctrines anterior to the Revolutionary war. We knew Mr. McMasters very well, as we did the gentle girl who gave her heart and hand to the Methodist circuit-rider.

Old Father Gruber had the misfortune when on the Burlington (New Jersey) circuit to be afflicted with a young man for a colleague who had evidently mistaken his calling. He was not only very dressy, but foppish, and much given to fishing and shooting, and Gruber was in the habit of referring to him as his "dandy colleague." There were in the Conference during Mr. King's time Rev. Thomas Sovreign and James H. Dandy, and Mr. Gruber, playing upon names, was wont to say, "We have in the Conference one Sovreign, one King, and only one real Dandy." Although an entirely different sort of man, there was about King, as with Barns, a novelty of style that no effort at word-painting could adequately express. His gestures, if we may so term his action, were peculiarly his own, and hence quite original. He differed essentially in manner, style, and conduct from very many other Methodist preachers.

It must in candor be admitted that some gentlemen, and not a few, who affect the livery of the pulpit are slovenly in their way of life, by which we mean that they fail to develop or illustrate the dignity of the high calling which they assume to represent. We do not mean to say, of course, that a minister of the Gospel, be he Methodist or "what not," can be an absolute

saint on earth, or that he should be an anchorite, or that he must put on the hypocrisy of the monastic order, or ignore what we may term the humanities of society, but he should nevertheless bear upon his front the badge of heaven, and so carry in his hand the great commission with which he has been intrusted as will prove to all men

"That he is honest in the sacred cause."

Mr. King was exceptional in this regard. No man could meet him without being impressed that he stood in the presence of a servant of the Most High. Unselfish, as we have said, his devotion to the great cause in which he was engaged was intense. His life, we think, may be characterized a blameless one, and

"His preaching, but more his practice, wrought
A living sermon of the truth he taught."

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Brickmakers of 1832.

THE events of forty-seven years have been buried in the past since the stillness of the night was wakened by uncommon, if not strange, noises, issuing from the brick-kilns with which the commons in the southwestern part of Philadelphia were dotted in those early days. As has been mentioned before in the course of this work, it was in the year 1832 that the Asiatic cholera, which had swept over the countries of Europe, scattering death and desolation in its path, first made its appearance in the United States. The masses of the people, always more or less readily affected by the approach of anything like a plague, were everywhere greatly alarmed, and such as could afford to do so retired in large numbers from the cities to the country, where, as was popularly believed, they would be more secure from attack. The alarm which was felt in Philadelphia when it was announced that the plague had absolutely made its appearance in New York, turned to panic when the first case of cholera occurred in the old Northern Liberty district, and we well remember with what hot haste the children in the neighborhood where we resided were packed off to visit country cousins for an indefinite period. It was at such a time

and in such a condition of things that the uncommon noises were heard issuing from the empty brick-kilns a short distance west of what we, in a previous chapter, mentioned as "Goosetown." It was the voice of supplication and prayer to Almighty God, not only that He would ward off the pestilence, but that He would save the souls of those who, in this alarming emergency, turned the roughly-constructed brick-kilns into places of worship.

It is nearly half a century since those meetings were begun, and not one in fifty, perhaps, of the men and women who then and there literally clothed themselves with ashes, if not in sackcloth, are left to recur to those scenes. The men who thus resorted to the commons to seek salvation were a rough, hardy, and hard-working set of persons. Their day's work in the brick-yards was begun at or before daylight in the morning, and was generally finished by noon, the newly-moulded bricks that came from their hands being left on the clayed floor to dry until nearly sunset; and the plague and the prayer-meetings constituted an entirely new sensation. There was no Methodist meeting-house or church of any kind west of Broad Street in those days, if we except Asbury, which was on the other side of the river, and a little chapel on Spruce Street wharf, Schuylkill, belonging to a Baptist congregation "in the city," and used for baptismal occasions. Missionaries or colporteurs, however, from some of the down-town churches visited the brick-yard movement, and generally at first conducted the services. The prayer-

meetings in the kilns and sheds connected with the brick-yards were kept up during the summer, and many, many times the stillness of the night was broken by the stentorian voice of Martin Summers or one of the Sipp's as it rung out on the night wind in tones of agonized petition; and these noises, supplemented by the moaning voices of other stalwart men, and women, too, whose hearts had been broken up, or the more cheerful voices of such as had found relief in the saving grace of God, all issuing from those dirty walls among the clay ponds, gave to the scene a fitful, weird, and thrilling interest.

MOVING TO NEW QUARTERS.

On the northwest corner of what in those days was known as Schuylkill Front Street and Chestnut, stood an old and deserted building, which was called "the china factory." It had been constructed in yet earlier days and used for a pumping station to the old water-works, another portion of which was located at "Centre Square," where the new Public Buildings are now being erected; and when the autumn leaves began to fall, the chill of the night air suggested to the brickmakers that some better arrangements were necessary for their meetings, and permission was obtained to occupy the old china factory. The accommodations were very meagre here, and the location was not at all desirable, and shortly thereafter a large room was obtained in a building on the north side of Market Street a short distance east of Twenty-second Street, then Schuylkill Front,

which had been a "country tavern" or stopping-place for the drivers of the Conestoga wagons, in which, in the olden time, the freighting business between Philadelphia and Pittsburg was done. Here, or perhaps before the removal to Market Street, a society was formed which was for some years known only as

THE BRICKMAKERS' CHURCH.

Preaching was supplied at first from St. George's, and afterward alternately from some of the other churches, and within a year from the inauguration of the brick-yard movement the society increased to such an extent as to seemingly warrant the adoption of measures for building a church edifice.

The late Dr. William Swaim, long celebrated as the proprietor of "Swaim's Panacea," owned a large plot of ground in the neighborhood of Walnut and Twentieth Streets, then called Schuylkill Third Street; and, with a view doubtless to the improvement of the neighborhood, which was at that time quite sparsely settled, he made a gift of a lot to the brickmakers on which to build a church, on the east side of Twentieth Street, below Walnut, and the society began at once to perfect arrangements for building. This was in 1833. The people composing the society were all poor, the traditional condition, as we have had occasion to say previously, of the old-time Methodists; but they were all willing to work and do anything they could to forward the enterprise. Some of the "boss" brickmakers made contributions of their material, and one

or two lumber dealers in the western part of the city gave of that essential article, and others contributed according to their ability of money, and within the year the walls of the new structure were completed and the roof put on. All that was expected for the time being was a shelter, for the undertaking was really a very serious one for that people, and, the building having been roofed in, renewed efforts were made to finish the basement story to be used for class and preaching purposes. This was done either within the year mentioned or early in 1834, which is the date at which the society first appears on the records of the Conference as

THE WESTERN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH,

with Thomas Neal as pastor in charge. We remember "Pappy Neal," as they used to call him, very well. He was a hard-working, sincere old gentleman, of most kindly disposition, and made himself liked by all with whom he was in any way associated. He made no pretension either to learning or skill as a preacher, but was earnest, faithful, and untiring in the work of his Master. He remained two years with the Western people, and left them with a recorded membership of two hundred and fifty. This society never appeared on the Conference record as the Brickmakers' Church. Dr. Swaim refused to deed the ground to it under that name, considering it, doubtless, not sufficiently respectable; and we may here remark that the substitution of another, under which the society was incorporated, was a cause for such rankling dissatisfaction among the original

members as gave rise to an amount of trouble that can scarcely even yet be estimated.

In the basement of the building was quite a large Sunday-school room, which was used for preaching purposes until the auditorium was finished, which, according to our recollection, was in 1836–37, while Bartholomew Weed was the pastor in charge. Mr. Weed's pastorate closed with two hundred and thirty-four members in the society.

In 1838 the bishops sent to the new and struggling society Thomas B. Tibbles. Mr. Tibbles was a married man, and, we think, a Delawarean, and he had been in charge of the congregation but a few months when a frightful scandal arose concerning him. It was talked of and discussed, and efforts were made to silence it, but, like the ghost of Banquo, "it would not down," and it was finally brought to the attention of the Conference, but after due examination the charges against him were disproved. The society had now been worshipping in the auditorium some four years. The building was a fine and commodious one, but without galleries, and the neighborhood was settling up rapidly all around. There was still no other Methodist church west of Broad Street, and yet the Western did not fill up, unless on an exceptional occasion. It was thought by many to be too much of a barn, and not sufficiently comfortable in appearance to render it attractive to worshippers, and there was much talk of putting in the galleries, but the operation was postponed. It was, however, manifest that there was something wrong.

The Tibbles scandal had without doubt been very damaging, but it only supplemented a condition of things that was before unsuccessful, and in 1839–40 Rev. Pennell Combs was sent out to this frontier station with a hope that he could wake it up and infuse into it the needed vitality, and, judging from the record, he succeeded to some extent at least, for at the close of his pastorate, in 1840, the membership was increased to four hundred and thirty. These figures, however, fell off at the close of the following year, during which Rev. John S. Inskip was in charge, to three hundred and eighteen. Mr. Combs, who still lives, was a peculiar man. He was not only as a preacher, but in all else, aggressive. Adopting the style of the late Rev. John Chambers as a temperance orator, he carried the same methods into the pulpit, and, as a consequence, his successes were sometimes like the apples of the Dead Sea, turned to ashes.

Rev. Robert M. Greenbank was the pastor in charge in 1842–43, and in 1844, Rev. William A. Wiggins being in charge, the galleries were put in, notwithstanding the inability of the best preachers that were sent, to fill the lower floor; and so the Western came to be considered a failure. In 1845 Rev. John A. Boyle was in charge, and in 1846 "Billy Barns," who could pack old and new Salem to the roof, failed to make anything out of the Western. In 1847–48 Rev. R. W. Thomas was in charge, and in 1849 Joshua Humphreys, who closed his pastorate with a membership of one hundred and ninety-three, and in 1850–52 the society appears

on the Conference records as a mission, the membership having run down in 1853 to one hundred and seventy-three.

This church and congregation is a subject for grave study. To the lover of Methodism its history is a painful one. For nearly half a century it has been the nursling of the Conference. The single talent given to it at the beginning seems to have been buried, and when dug up for examination is found to be absolutely short of its original weight. We knew a good deal about the Western in the olden time, when we were much younger than now, and we think its prime difficulty was a want of harmony or concord among all the brethren. There seemed, however, always something inexplicable about the matter. There can, of course, be concord without harmony, and harmony, seemingly at least, without concord, but in a case like this, both are, to our mind, indispensable. For a long while there were two distinctive elements in the church. How that may be now we do not know, but so unpropitious have matters grown to be, as we have learned recently, that a proposition to close the church altogether was gravely discussed a few months since.

The brickmaker element, always more or less discontented since the adoption of the Western name, seceded under Mr. Combs, and, being organized under their old title, subsequently obtained a lot of ground on Twentieth Street, above Chestnut, and built thereon a very comfortable-looking house, which they occupied for some years, and then, rusting out, that society was

disbanded, and the real brickmakers' church is now occupied, in part, as a livery-stable. We should hardly like to criticise this subject as it deserves, lest we might be charged with unkindness, if not something of a more grave nature; but it is a strong illustration of the futility of trying to rise in this world over the influence of a bad name. Of course, such a thing is often done where an individual has succeeded in accumulating a large amount of money, even supposing that it was obtained by really dishonest or other disreputable practices, for this is the age, of all others, when the possession of wealth covers a multitude of sins. We would not say that the Western has deservedly a bad name; in fact, the worst thing about its name is the circumstance that whilst Methodism has flourished and grown and expanded everywhere during the many years of its existence, it has wellnigh suffered death in the Twentieth Street church edifice.

Because of its misfortune—nothing more—it has for many, many years been looked upon as a sort of dead-and-alive affair,—a whited sepulchre or charnel-house. Such may be an unjust or, at least, uncharitable, criticism; but, then, what is to be done if the public, whose patronage is sought, persists in such a belief? Much money has been spent, as we know, to build up the Western Church. After the galleries a new and more tasteful front was put up, and then an organ was purchased, and other improvements were made from time to time, and we strongly suspect that, after all, that which did most to obstruct the growth of the society

as a vital Christian organization was the grand mistake of subordinating the religion of Christ to the dictum of "the almighty dollar."

A REMINISCENCE.

A good many years ago, away back in the forties, there was a very prosperous time among the manufacturers of cotton and woollen fabrics. We remember two persons who were workmen in one of the mills then existing in the western part of our city. They were ignorant men,—we do not, however, use the term offensively. They knew the trade to which they had been reared, and they were possessed of sufficient intelligence to enable them to understand that the business was at the time extremely profitable. They were ambitious, and desirous to better their condition in life, and being able to obtain the requisite credit, they each purchased what was known as "a set of machinery" for carding, spinning, and weaving Kentucky jeans, and, having rented room and power in the mill where they had been working as employés, they began operations on their own account. The profits realized were fabulous, and in a very short time they had paid for their machinery, and had more money subject to draft with their factors than they knew what to do with. They were fast friends,—Damon and Pythias like,—and whatever one did the other would follow. Each moved into a fine residence and furnished it gorgeously. They purchased for themselves fast horses and carriages, seeking to rival each other. Their success continued and

their gains grew enormously. Each built on the same street, facing the other, a factory, and abandoned the rented premises, and as the accumulation of money went on the one bought another mill, and his friend constructed another of still greater capacity and value, and so they prospered and lived in the indulgences of the world according to their increased and what was esteemed marvellous wealth, and, with their families, they of course became measurably, at least, gay.

They were both Methodists, and members of the Western Church. They had listened to the preaching of "Pappy Neal" in the basement when their contributions to the penny collection were no greater than that of the most humble worshipper; but when fortune had smiled upon them with such a broad laugh as to astonish everybody, they claimed that the ownership and driving of fast horses, or an occasional visit to the race-course, either to test the speed of their own stock or witness that of other owners, was not inconsistent with their professions as Christian men. They were liberal givers to the church. As each new improvement was suggested their purse-strings were loosened to an extent that was unapproachable by any other member of the society; and just as naturally as water finds its level, so these two gentlemen came to be the autocrats of the institution, and the reader will see at a glance how the bridge was constructed that was supposed to join the elements in the Western Church, and knowing, as he must, that it was guarded at each end by sentinels who wore a strange uniform, he will not marvel if,

when new recruits were called in to give utterance to the "shibboleth," they failed to pronounce the word correctly, and therefore went on their way in another direction. One of these gentlemen has paid the debt of nature, the other lives remote from the scenes of his early triumphs, and the single talent entrusted to Western Church is without increase.

CHAPTER XXV.

"THERE is no time like the old time,
When you and I were young,"

sang the genial and versatile Holmes. True, we were obliged to walk to meeting in those days, even though we carried our shoes in our hand, and the cushioned seats were less luxuriously comfortable. There was nothing then like travelling at the rate of fifty or sixty miles an hour, and there were no ferries between New York and Havre or Philadelphia and Liverpool as now. The spires of the churches were not ambitious to mix with the clouds, nor did the organ peal invite us to dance rather than to pray. If the starch in our collars was less stiff, it was also less cutting. If the beauty of the women in church was less the result of painting, it was altogether more lovely, and if there were no millionnaires in those times, neither was there a race of ghouls to rob the poor and, fattening on the misfortunes of others, reduce their fellow-men to practical slavery. "There is no friend like the old friend," and "no love like the old;" and everybody and everything is in a hurry. As to religion, Ruskin, who some persons may set down for an old fogy, says, "most of the good, religious communication that I remember has been done on foot, and it cannot be easily done faster than at a foot-pace," an opinion in which we are inclined to concur.

Although mention has been heretofore made of Ebenezer Church as the first-born of Old Mother St. George's, we may not bring these sketches to a close without a further brief reference to her as first among the parent churches of the metropolis of the Keystone State. She, too, became long since a mother in Israel. Occupying what was a frontier station at the south end of Philadelphia in the olden time, several of her daughters are now prospering around her. The Mariners' Bethel, noticed in a previous chapter, with its stately edifice on Washington Street, may be mentioned as the first-born of Ebenezer; and St. Paul's, with its fine structure on Catharine Street, above Sixth, as the second. Wharton Street, which we shall notice more at length directly, was the third daughter, and some eight or ten more churches, whose buildings dot the southern and southwestern portions of the same city, may be considered as the legitimate offspring of Ebenezer, while scattered in all directions, north, south, and west, are to be found in the various congregations whose origin has no connection with that society, many members whose first experience in Methodism was had within her walls. The old church has well illustrated its name as "the stone of help" during the fourscore years and ten of its existence, and there must be many refreshing memories of Ebenezer among the old-time Methodists who are yet permitted to remain with us. A few—and alas how meagre the number!—of those whom we met there forty years ago yet live, "and looking like the oak worn, but still steady," count the hours that shall pass ere they

too are called to join the great company that has gone before. Mr. Tasker, now of Wharton Street; Mr. Whiteman, of Broad and Arch Streets; Mr. Erastus Poulson, of Christ Church; and Mr. David Bowen, who we believe still clings to the old fortress, are among the very few whom we can recall as members when the voices of the two Coopers, Bartine, Cookman, Hodgson, Thompson, and others of the old guard were heard within her walls; while "Josie Lonton," Robert Gaw, Robert Whitendale, John McMasters, William Flanigen, David Kollock, "Jerry Clark," "Sammy Bayne," William Pidgeon, and a host of others whose names we might recall, delivered up to the Master, many years agone, the several talents that had been entrusted to their keeping with their accumulations. Good Old Ebenezer, may her memories be forever green!

MORE MISSIONARY EFFORT.

Some time previous to the year 1840, probably in '37 or '38, several young men, members of Ebenezer Church, realized the necessity for some kind of missionary work in the lower section of the old Southwark district, and, seeking to give practical effect to their convictions, they obtained possession of a small frame building which then stood on the east side of Front Street at the lower end of the Navy-Yard wall, and there they opened and established a Sunday-school. That wonderful agency—the Sunday-school—which has done so much for Methodism, and toward the evangelization of society generally, was then only in its infancy,

the first one organized by the Methodists having been commenced by Union Church in 1819. In the course of a very short time these young men gathered into their fold as many boys and girls as the limited means within their control would accommodate. Prominent in this movement, the leader of it, indeed, was William C. Poulson, who became superintendent of the school, and afterward entered the ministry of the Methodist Church. We remember that one of his associates in the movement, who still lives, we think, was Francis Eaton. The school was conducted there for about two years, and the harvest was quite equal to the expectations of its founders, so much so indeed as that, at the end of that time, those engaged in the movement conceived the necessity for making more extended efforts for the benefit of the then thinly-settled neighborhood; and, not heeding the caution of Mr. Asbury concerning the building of churches in out-of-the-way places, they purchased a lot on Rye Street, a twenty-foot thoroughfare running south from Wharton Street, on which they proceeded to erect a church and school edifice. It was a very unpretending establishment when completed, showing that the brethren were by no means ambitious in their purposes. The size of the lot was about twenty-five by forty feet, and they covered the entire space with bricks and mortar; and having done this much, or perhaps before building, they organized themselves into a society, calling to their aid such recruits as they could obtain, either from the mother-church or from outside. They named their little colony

BETHESDA MISSION,

and in the year 1840 it appeared on the Conference minutes with a membership of one hundred and forty-one, which, before the following meeting in 1841, had been increased to one hundred and sixty. Bethesda, although a very modest affair, so far as concerned the building, was a success, and taught those connected with it and others who still remained in Ebenezer the necessity for further expansion. The brethren, however, continued to worship and carry on their Sunday-school in Rye Street until the year 1843, gathering in fresh sheaves all the while. It was then determined to enlarge that portion of Zion and raise the mission to the more dignified and useful status of a regular church society. Among the gentlemen who were active in this new movement, all Ebenezer people, were Mr. Thomas T. Tasker, already mentioned, and who at the age of fourscore years is untiring of well doing, Andrew Godshall, J. Kenny, Joseph Maule, George Mitchell, William C. Poulson, and James Singleton, and having purchased a large lot on the south side of Wharton Street, they proceeded at once to erect what is now known as

WHARTON STREET CHURCH.

The new organization of course absorbed the old mission, and Wharton Street appears on the minutes of the Conference for the first time in 1843, with a membership of five hundred and eighty and William Cooper as the pastor in charge. The quaint little building on Rye

Street still stands, and is used for mechanical purposes. After the absorption of the mission the old building was purchased by the late Thomas D. Grover, a prominent Native American politician of the old Southwark district, and was by him dedicated as a public hall for the use of one of the political ward organizations of that period.

The Wharton Street congregation was as usual at this time composed of persons of very moderate means, but there were, nevertheless, many more and much better resources for raising money than formerly; yet the undertaking was one of no inconsiderable consequence, and imposed upon those engaged in it much and arduous labor. The men engaged in the movement, however, would brook no such word as fail. They were both industrious and energetic, and they had a perfect realization of the aphorism, that God helps those most who help themselves. They made a contract with James Stevenson, a builder of considerable enterprise, and they engaged to provide him with sufficient money weekly to pay all the workmen employed on the building, and this they did, as we are assured, with great fidelity, the building committee soliciting and collecting subscriptions from door to door through the week, with which to make good their engagements at its close, and within the year 1842 the new church edifice was completed and dedicated to the service of Almighty God. Wharton Street Church when completed was considered a very fine structure, and was thought to be sufficiently commodious for all time in the future, but it was in a few years found to be altogether inadequate to the needs of the greatly

increased population of its neighborhood, and in 1870 the pressure for more room was such that the society determined to rebuild, and it is to-day among the finest and most commodious Methodist church edifices in the city. There have been many, very many, happy seasons at Wharton Street, and the society stands to-day as among the bright jewels of Philadelphia Methodism.

The first preacher assigned to Bethesda mission was

REV. JOHN A. BOYLE,

who, as we remember him in health, was, physically, among the finest-looking men in the Conference, but his health broke down after a few years of service, and in 1847 he was obliged to retire from the work of the ministry to seek in more active pursuits a restoration of failing strength. He was subsequently, and for several years, until about 1854, superintendent of Gloucester furnace in New Jersey, during a part of which time he represented one of the Atlantic County districts in the Legislature of that State. He returned to Philadelphia in 1854, where he was again attacked with the disease which threatened his life. In 1856 he removed to Clearfield County, Pennsylvania, and there practised law, until the breaking out of the Rebellion in 1861, when, having measurably recovered his health, he joined the One Hundred and Eleventh Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteers as adjutant. He was soon afterward promoted to the rank of major, and was killed in battle at Wauhatchie, Tennessee, in October, 1863. Mr. Boyle was an earnest and zealous preacher, and gave

much promise of distinction while in the ministry. He was extremely practical, and what he undertook to do in every relation of life he performed with a cheerful and willing heart. As a preacher, he was uniformly successful in building up his congregation. He was a gallant soldier, first of the Cross and then of his country, and his ministerial mantle is worthily worn by a son, who is the present pastor of Christ Church, in West Philadelphia. To the late

WILLIAM C. POULSON,

we think, may justly be awarded the credit of having planted and nurtured the seed from which Wharton Street Church grew into existence. He was an ardent advocate of, and worker for, the Sunday-school system. Appreciating the advantages that must accrue from seed early sowed and the careful nurturing of the plants grown therefrom, he devoted himself most earnestly to Sunday-school work, and when lecturing on the subject, in life, he declared that the only inscription he desired to be placed on his tomb was, "I love the Sabbath-school."* Mr. Poulson was born in Accomac County, Eastern Shore of Virginia, in the year 1813. He was converted when but sixteen years of age, and joined the society of Accomac district when it was in charge of Rev. Matthew Sorin. In 1830 he removed to Phila-

* Mr. Poulson was buried in the ground attached to Fairmount Church, Annamessick circuit, where he died, and a monument erected to his memory by the members of the society bears the desired inscription.

delphia and joined Ebenezer, commencing at once to labor in the Sunday-school, of which he was subsequently chosen superintendent. He was early called as a class-leader and exhorter, positions which he filled with much satisfaction. Having removed into a neighborhood remote from Wharton Street, he connected himself with Union Church, and in 1840 or 1841 he was licensed to preach. In 1844 he was admitted to the Philadelphia Conference on trial, and was assigned to Annamessick circuit, Snow Hill district. In 1845 he was reappointed to the same circuit, much to the gratification of the people among whom he had been laboring, and by whom he was much beloved; but the Destroyer had been following in his wake from the time of his entering the Conference, and in the second year of his itinerancy he yielded up his life to the God who gave it, full of faith and trust in the promises of his Saviour. Mr. Poulson gave much promise of usefulness in the ministry, and his early death was deeply deplored by all who knew him. He was a man of much piety and great devotion to the cause of religion. Of an amiable disposition and much kindness of heart, he made friends rapidly, and was hence, for a young man, popular. As a preacher, he was logical, methodical, and persuasive. He made no pretensions to style or oratory, but would probably, if his life had been spared, have risen to an important position among his colleagues in the ministry; but, then,

"Is it not better to die willingly
Than linger till the glass be all outrun?"

CHAPTER XXVI.

Rev. John Wesley.

With this chapter we bring these somewhat desultory sketches to a close. We might very well continue them at much greater length, noticing the progress of more modern Methodism locally and otherwise, but such was not the original design of the author. Many volumes would be required to notice even very briefly the movement and growth of this mighty organization in detail. Occupying at the beginning a space which, figuratively speaking, could be covered by a man's hand, its temples now dot the civilized world, while its educational systems and its varied beneficences have been extended to all peoples. Go where we may and we shall hear the voice of the Methodist preacher, and from the frigid to the torrid zone its hymns of praise are sung. Its churches are counted by many thousands, and its membership is numbered in millions. States, territories, towns, and villages all have their local history of Methodism and its accomplishments, either written or unwritten, but we may not venture so much as a glance at them. There is much that might be written with profit to the general reader concerning the agencies and present operations of Methodism. Its missionary efforts, its Sunday-school enterprises, its educational

features and movements, and the varied charities that have grown up and twined around the system, especially during the last twenty or thirty years of its existence, are all subjects of great interest to Methodists, and ought to be so considered by all denominations of Christians. There are, too, many old-time preachers who were known in life to not a few of us who still survive, but of whom the existing generation knows practically nothing. Grateful sketches might be written of some of those. A few of them are mentioned in the books, while many others not less worthy, if less fortunate in this regard, live in memoriam only on the death record of the Annual Conference to which they belonged; but to make sketches of them might fail of interest to the general reader. We would subject ourselves, however, to deserved criticism if we should neglect, before bidding adieu to the subject, some more elaborate notice than we have heretofore given of the founder and organizer of Episcopal Methodism.

There is, of course, extant and in print ample biographical and general history of that distinguished divine. No history of Methodism could be written without Mr. Wesley as the central figure, and yet to very many, a large majority doubtless, of the readers for whose benefit or entertainment these sketches have been prepared, the history of his life and work is very much like a sealed book. The world of Methodism, and, indeed, of all Protestantism, knows Wesley just as civilization knows Washington and Napoleon,—names that are each like a great foot-print on the earth. There

are many names and many things unseen that we know of just as we do that God is great and good. The world knows the name of Wesley as synonymous with Methodism, precisely as it realizes that of Luther as synonymous with the Reformation; but we shall nevertheless not err, we think, in saying that beyond this general idea, the mass of the people know but little in detail concerning the man to whom society owes so much for the promotion of revealed religion.

John Wesley was born in Epworth, Lincolnshire, England, June 14, 1703. The original name was Westley, and his father Samuel was an English clergyman, who was born in Preston, somewhere along between 1662 and 1668, according to different authorities. He died, however, April 30, 1735. The elder Wesley was designed by his father, whose name also, by the way, was John, for a Dissenting minister, but having joined the Church of England, he entered Exeter College, Oxford, as a "poor scholar," and supported himself by teaching until he obtained orders. He developed much ability as a writer, both in prose and poetry, during his life. Preached against King James's "declaration for liberty of conscience,"—1688,—and wrote in defence of the "revolution" that occurred subsequently.

For his services in the cause of that revolution he was presented with the living of Epworth, and continued to be the rector of that parish for more than forty years, the living of Wroote having been also, meanwhile, bestowed upon him. The Wesleys were

blessed with a most excellent and devoted Christian mother, who was the instructress of her children in early life.* To John, who was the second of three sons, she paid particular attention, designing to devote him to the service of God as a thank-offering on account of the preservation of his life under extraordinary circumstances.

When about six years of age the parsonage from some cause took fire and was burned, and the boy John having been providentially rescued, the mother considered the circumstance, as she says in her journal of private meditations, as "laying her under special obligation to be more particularly carefull of the soul of a child whom God had so mercifully provided for." Under such training and culture the boy whose manhood shone with such brightness was more than usually serious, and it is stated by one of his biographers that when but eight years of age he was permitted by his father to partake of the sacrament. At the age of eleven years he was placed in the Charter-House, where he attracted marked attention on account of his diligence and rapid progress in learning, becoming a great favorite of Dr. Walker, his master.

At about the age of seventeen the founder of Methodism entered Christ Church College, Oxford, and at twenty-two years of age he was ordained deacon.

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* "I can find no evidence that the boys were ever put to any school in the country: their mother having a very bad opinion of the common methods of instructing and governing children." —Dr. Whitehead.

At this period of Mr. Wesley's life, says a biographer, "his natural temper was gay and sprightly, with a turn for wit and humor." And Mr. Babcock referred to him as "the very sensible and acute collegian; a young fellow of the finest classical taste, and of the most liberal and manly sentiments."

In 1726 he was elected a Fellow of Lincoln College, and appointed a Greek lecturer and moderator, and a year later was graduated a Master of Arts. Shortly after his ordination as deacon he took the position of curate for his father, and whilst in that capacity was ordained to the priesthood. He came from a long line of preachers, and it is something remarkable that the same spirit of reform or nonconformity that was finally developed in him was an active and, indeed, aggressive principle with and in his grandfather, who, in 1661, was arrested and committed to jail on account of what were deemed his heterodox teachings, and when, after being released, he removed with his family to another town, the corporation prohibited his settling there.

MR. WESLEY A CREATURE OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

While all the biographers of Mr. Wesley unite in such opinion of him as quoted, he was not, we judge, in early life estimated or considered as an extraordinary person. His mother was a daughter of Dr. Annesley, an eminent nonconformist minister, and it would thus seem that from both sides he had inherited a spirit of resistance or nonconformity to the church establishment of the realm, however he might and did cling

to its traditions and forms. He was, however, very early in life deeply impressed with the decadence of religious feeling and conduct throughout the world.

We mentioned in an early chapter of this work the connection of Mr. Wesley with what was termed by way of derision "the Holy Club," and we traced briefly the steps by which he progressed to the formation of what came to be known as a Methodist society, a term, also, which, as previously seen, was given to "the new generation" of Christians by way of reproach.* Like most men who have made their mark on the tablets of the world's history, Mr. Wesley was a creature of circumstances. He had no thought of revolution in the beginning of his career. The Established Church,

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* "From the name of an ancient sect of physicians, say some of Mr. Wesley's biographers; but probably the wits of Oxford who imposed the name knew nothing of that sect of the middle ages. The nonconformists were often called in derision Methodists; and the name was probably transmitted from them; or it might be given merely from the rigid adherence to method of study by Charles Wesley. It is, however, somewhat worthy of notice, that before the time of nonconformity properly so called we find Methodists mentioned as one of the minor sects in conjunction with the Anabaptists; for as early as 1639, in a sermon preached at Lambeth, they are rated in good set style for their aversion to rhetorical sermons. . . . At a later period, 1693, some of the nonconformists who had renounced the imputation of Christ's righteousness in justification, except in the merit of it, and whose views were somewhat similar to those of the Wesleyan Methodists, on the imputation of faith for righteousness, were called by their brethren the New Methodists." (Emory's Life of Wesley.)

with its traditions, its forms and ceremonies, were all dear to him, and we have seen how tenaciously he clung to them for a time, and that even after breaking away from the Church, and having entered upon the work of forming a new organization, he would have introduced as many of them as possible into the newly-formed structure. It was not until after the establishment of Methodism in the New World that he was able to get his mind away from the apostolic succession as applicable to the episcopal office, a prejudice, for such it must be regarded, which was for a time extremely embarrassing to the new movement. Nor is it at all certain that when uttering the memorable sentiment, "the world is my parish," he yet expected the establishment of a church different from that in which he had been reared.

But how adown the steps of the centuries these reform movements have progressed, each agent, preacher, or leader as he may be termed, doing simply what Mr. Wesley proposed to himself when he gave utterance to the declaration we have quoted! First, Wycliffe; then the glorious and unterrified Huss, burned at the stake; then the stalwart Luther; then the intrepid Knox; then the bland, amiable, loving, yet energetic and untiring Wesley. No one supposes that Wycliffe, when, in the year 1360, he distinguished himself in a controversy with the mendicant friars, contemplated revolution, or that he then more than sought to correct certain errors and abuses that were practised by these orders. When, half a century later, Huss embraced the views

of Wycliffe and began to write and preach against the misconduct of the clergy, he sought, as he supposed, but a simple reform of abuses; but he was impelled forward step by step, just as was Mr. Wesley, only that the sturdy Bohemian met with such fierce and dastardly opposition as caused the sacrifice of his life at the stake. So Luther, a century later,—another step down the declivity of time,—when declaring, "It is God's way to make of beggars men of power, just as He made the world of nothing," had no idea that the cloister of Erfurt should realize the proud distinction of being the birthplace of Lutheran Protestantism, and of the evangelical doctrine of justification by faith without the works of the law. It was with Wesley as with Luther, only that the former lived under a better civilization. Deeply impressed—shocked, indeed—and pained by the irregularities and corruptions of the Romish Church, of which he was a part, the great German preacher sought at first only to correct its errors and reform its practices, but he was driven forward by the constantly-occurring circumstances, into such new antagonisms as caused the world wellnigh to shake with the conflict between the German mendicant priest who had sung his way through the streets as a beggar and the then all-powerful Church of Rome.

THE EXPERIENCE OF MR. WESLEY

was very different from that of the reformers who had preceded him. The subtle but powerful logic of Wycliffe; the sturdy blows of John Huss; the tremendous

and all-powerful rhetoric of Martin Luther, and the convincing arguments of John Knox, had long time before pierced the fortress of superstitious error and corruption, and brushed away, and indeed buried, many of the obstacles to reform. He was not, in the same sense as these, an aggressive reformer. The circumstances were widely different, and he hence had no occasion to make violent attacks on the Papacy or the Church of England, but he appealed to the sense of the people. The artillery with which he sought to break down the power of the arch-fiend and enemy of mankind was prayer. The troops which he brought into the field as an invading army were clothed in the panoply of the Holy Ghost, and with these, supplemented by the promises of the Gospel, he captured great masses of the people, and accomplished a work that had been but half done by the great reformers who had gone before him in the preceding centuries.

They were called to resist a colossal and despotic power. Against them was fulminated not only the terrors of the law but the whole power of the Church; while our hero, unfurling the banner of the Cross and a free salvation, was met with open arms, and was practically unmolested by the vengeance of man's hate or the dictum of temporal or so-called spiritual power. True, the finger of scorn and derision was for a time pointed at him and his followers, and on several occasions he was insulted and, as it were, spat upon, a mob of men threatening to do him personal injury; but these threats and outrages were quieted by the power of

his preaching and the blameless nature of his life and conduct.

As the circumstances under which Mr. Wesley was called to act, and his methods differed from those of the early reformers, so was he altogether different in disposition and temperament. The work in which he was engaged was of a more spiritual nature than were the movements of his several predecessors. Personally he was more cultured, more refined, than they. He had been reared under more humanizing circumstances. He was gentle, kind, and loving, but not by any means wanting in firmness and decision of character or of purpose.

In 1735 Mr. Wesley conceived the idea and formed the purpose to visit America as a missionary to the Indians. This design met with much opposition from friends. For a time they remonstrated kindly, and sought to persuade him from his purpose, but failing in that, some of them became more demonstrative, while others scoffed at and ridiculed him. One of his friends said to him, "What is this, sir? Are you turned Quixotic, too? Will nothing serve you but to encounter wind-mills?" To which he replied, "Sir, if the Bible be not true, I am as very a fool and madman as you can conceive; but if it be of God, I am sober-minded." His immediate companions on the voyage were his brother Samuel, Mr. Benjamin Ingham, of Queen's College, and Mr. Charles Delamotte, the son of a London merchant, and they set sail for the New World on the 14th of October, 1735, and on the 6th of February,

1736, after a somewhat perilous passage, they arrived at Savannah, Georgia; and here we shall see again, how much the creature of circumstances Mr. Wesley was. He sought the wilderness of a new, strange, and measurably unbroken country to preach to the Indians, and in that at least it may be supposed, considering all the conditions, that he was to an extent, if not Quixotic, greatly astray, but God did not permit him to test that experiment. He was evidently being schooled for the great events of his life, albeit unknowingly to himself, and although his mission was a failure in so far as man's judgment was concerned, it is plain to see and easy to believe that it constituted a part of the Divine plan of raising up the man for the special work which was necessary to be performed. The Jews considered the mission of Christ a failure, and even now refuse to recognize his Divine origin or the purpose of his embassy on earth, and it is by no means a hard thing to trace or discover the analogy of the two cases. It was necessary that Mr. Wesley should have such an experience to teach him what he was. It was had at a time of life when character would be best formed and developed, and it was such as to test, and at the same time strengthen his stability of purpose; to fix more deeply his faith, and through being brought into contact and association with the Moravians, he was taught the great lesson of life, namely, that he was still an unconverted man. The Georgia experience, including the voyage either way, exhibited the Almighty to him in such light as he had not before been revealed, and the

persecutions, in the midst of which he left the New World, gave to him renewed assurance that "a bruised reed" shall not be broken, nor shall the "smoking flax" be consumed.*

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* Mr. Wesley had been in America some time when he made the acquaintance of a Miss Hopkey, an accomplished young lady, and niece to the wife of the chief magistrate of Savannah, Mr. Causton, and who has been erroneously designated by some of Mr. Wesley's biographers as a daughter of the Caustons. The intimacy quite naturally approximated toward an engagement for marriage, but yet had not reached that point, when it was suggested by one of the friends who had accompanied him to Georgia, that the lady might not be just the kind of person suited for him, and after much reflection on the subject he determined to ask and be guided in the premises by the advice of the elders of the Moravian Church, of which there was an organization there. These brethren advised against any further prosecution of the intimacy, and Mr. Wesley accordingly retired with as much grace as would be expected from a gentleman of his culture. The lady subsequently, and indeed shortly thereafter, married a Mr. Williamson, thus showing probably that the great preacher had made a narrow escape. Finding it impracticable to preach to the Indians, Mr. Wesley and his friends had gathered into a society such persons as he found disposed to meet for worship, and assumed the rectorship, still clinging to the Established Church. He adhered to the rubric of the Church, and insisted on a rigid observance of its provisions, especially in so far as the sacraments were concerned, and when a person had neglected the ordinance, he required that the name should be given him on the previous day, if intending again to commune. The breaking away from the intimacy with Miss Hopkey had caused more or less of adverse feeling among the friends of the Caustons, and Mrs. Williamson after her marriage developed a disposition to do as she might please in regard to conforming to the rubric; and Mr. Wesley insisting on his rule, there grew up such a con-

Doubtless Mr. Wesley was glad to get home again from his visit to America, and to meet again his old

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dition of affairs as led to a crusade against the preacher. He had excluded Mrs. Williamson from the Lord's table because she would not conform to the rubric, and the Caustons charged that it was because she had refused to marry him. Matters grew worse daily, and when the time for the sitting of the court drew near, the magistrate sought to have the preacher indicted by the grand jury. He charged them to "beware of spiritual tyranny, and to oppose the new illegal authority which was usurped over their consciences." Mrs. Williamson made an affidavit, and the magistrate prepared and gave to the grand jury a document entitled "a list of grievances presented by the grand jury for Savannah this —— day of ——— 1737," and after much controversy and hearing of testimony, a majority of the jury finally returned the list of grievances in a modified form to the court, as what in legal parlance is termed a presentment. These troubles continued for some time. Mr. Wesley addressed the court, denying its jurisdiction as to ecclesiastical affairs, and demanding that he should be at once tried as to the charges which were of a secular nature, but the court hesitated and put the matter off from time to time; and a portion of the grand jury had drawn up for them, and signed, a protest against the proceeding of the majority, to be sent to England, Causton meanwhile pursuing Mr. Wesley with great bitterness, and urging the court to try him, a request in which Mr. Wesley joined; but the court still hesitated, and halted, evidently seeing the injustice of the persecution, and yet not quite able to resist, as it should have done, the manufactured public opinion of the colony; and finally Mr. Wesley consulted his friends as to the proper course for him to pursue. His own judgment was that Providence now called him to leave the place and return to England, and his friends concurred in that opinion. He forthwith gave notice to Causton that he intended leaving,—just what the magistrate desired, although he made a show of opposition,—and on the 22d of January, 1738,

friends in a field whose culture he could better understand and where the harvest would be commensurate to the labor bestowed upon it. But we may not trace his great career further in a single chapter at the close of our work. In appearance, judging from such portraits as we have seen of Mr. Wesley, he was in youth rather effeminate, considering his great strength of character, and although small of stature, he was of dignified and commanding presence. An eminent London artiste thus described him:

"The figure of Mr. Wesley was remarkable. His stature was low, his habit of body in every period of life the reverse of corpulent, and expressive of strict temperance and continual exercise. Notwithstanding his small size, his step was firm and his appearance till within a few years of his death vigorous and muscular. His face, for an old man, was one of the finest we have seen. A clear, smooth forehead, an aquiline nose, an eye the brightest and most piercing that can be considered, and a freshness of complexion scarcely ever to be found at his years, and expressive of the most perfect health, conspired to render him a venerable and interesting figure. . . . In dress he was the pattern of

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he again set sail for the shores of Old England, and in his journal under date February 17, he wrote, "It is now two years and almost four months since I left my native country, in order to teach the Georgian Indians the nature of Christianity; but what have I learned myself in the mean time? Why,—what I the least of all expected,—that I, who went to America to convert others, was never myself converted to God."

neatness and simplicity. A narrow plaited stock, a coat with a small upright collar, no buckles at his knees, no silk or velvet on any part of his apparel, and a head as white as snow, gave an idea of something primitive and apostolic, while an air of neatness and cleanliness was diffused over his whole person." While Mr. Wesley was a man of much amiability and great kindness of heart, he was yet a person of much firmness and decision: characteristics the blending of which may be seen from numerous incidents in his career.* Considering

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* Mr. Joseph Bradford was for some years the travelling companion of Mr. Wesley, and the relations of the two were of the most intimate and cordial nature, Bradford being intensely devoted to his chief. On a certain occasion, as related by Everett, Mr. Wesley said to his assistant, "Joseph, take those letters to the post."

"I will take them after preaching, sir," said Bradford.

"Take them now, Joseph," said Mr. Wesley; to which Bradford replied, "I wish to hear you preach, sir, and there will be sufficient time for the post after service."

"I insist upon you going now," said Mr. Wesley; when the other responded, "I will not go at present."

"You won't?"

"No, sir."

"Then," said Mr. Wesley, "we must part."

"Very good, sir," said Bradford.

The next morning after both had slept, Mr. Wesley said to his companion, "Joseph, have you considered what I said, that we must part?" to which the other replied, "Yes, sir."

"And must we part?" said Wesley.

"Please yourself, sir," said the companion and friend.

"Will you ask my pardon, Joseph?"

"No, sir," said Bradford.

MR. WESLEY AS A PREACHER,

we are not told that he ranked in speaking accomplishments with Cicero or others of the Grecian orators whose names have been handed down in history, and yet it may be that his utterances were even more successful before the mass of men than were the most finished specimens of written speech with which the world has been furnished as models. It must be conceded, however, that he was an eloquent preacher under any and all circumstances, for no man could have attained to the success he did as a preacher without possessing and discoursing to his audience the very essence of eloquence. His theme was the cross of Christ and the atonement, repentance and the remission of sins, a free salvation to a lost and ruined world. The extent, too, of his preaching was immense; he was constantly travelling, and while engaged in a multiplicity of administrative work he, nevertheless, preached daily, when opportunity offered, and the labor he performed during a series of years as preacher, administrator, and organizer, if undertaken by our friends in the ministry of the present day, would probably suffice

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"You won't?"

"No, sir."

"Then," said the great man, "I will ask yours," and Bradford was melted to tears.

That faithful assistant and friend remained near Mr. Wesley until his death, and had the melancholy pleasure of listening to his last utterance on earth, "Farewell."

to bury about fifty per cent. of the Conference annually. As an organizer and administrator or director of men Mr. Wesley was, we are impelled to say, without an equal. His conception of the itinerancy, that most wonderful lever for the establishment and promotion of Methodism, although possibly borrowed from Wycliffe, who sent his followers out through the country, to a limited extent, at least, in the fourteenth century, indicated not only an extraordinary breadth of vision, but most consummate practicability for design and execution. Mr. Wesley was one of the purest of men. In the language of Macaulay, "He was a man whose eloquence and logical acuteness might have rendered him eminent in literature, whose genius was not inferior to that of Richelieu." And another eminent author said of him: "A greater poet may rise than Homer or Milton; a greater theologian than Calvin; a greater philosopher than Bacon; a greater dramatist than any of ancient or modern fame, but a more distinguished revivalist of the churches than John Wesley, never." This was the mission of the great apostle of Methodism,—not to reform the world, nor the churches, but to revive and give to the decaying body of Christ's religion new life, new vitality, and new vigor. And, as is well said of him by another, "To-day men of all denominations honor his memory as one of the moral heroes and leaders of our race." Mr. Wesley died in March, 1791, in the eighty-eighth year of his age.

APPENDIX.

DOCTRINE.

ARTICLES OF RELIGION OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

I.—*Of Faith in the Holy Trinity.*

THERE is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the maker and preserver of all things, visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there are three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

II.—*Of the Word, or Son of God, who was made very man.*

The Son, who is the Word of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed virgin; so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for the actual sins of men.

III.—*Of the Resurrection of Christ.*

Christ did truly rise again from the dead, and took again his body, with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth until he return to judge all men at the last day.

IV.—*Of the Holy Ghost.*

The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.

V.—*The Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation.*

The Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scripture, we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.

The names of the Canonical Books.

Genesis; Exodus; Leviticus; Numbers; Deuteronomy; Joshua; Judges; Ruth; The First Book of Samuel; The Second Book of Samuel; The First Book of Kings; The Second Book of Kings; The First Book of Chronicles; The Second Book of Chronicles; The Book of Ezra; The Book of Nehemiah; The Book of Esther; The Book of Job; The Psalms; The Proverbs; Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher; Cantica, or Song of Solomon; Four Prophets the greater; Twelve Prophets the less. All the books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive and account canonical.

VI.—*Of the Old Testament.*

The Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only mediator between God and man, being both God and man. Wherefore they are not to be heard who feign that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the law given from God by Moses, as touching ceremonies and rites, doth not bind Christians, nor ought the civil precepts thereof of necessity be received in any common-

wealth; yet, notwithstanding, no Christian whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments which are called moral.

VII.—*Of Original or Birth Sin.*

Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually.

VIII.—*Of Free Will.*

The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and works, to faith, and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.

IX.—*Of the Justification of Man.*

We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.

X.—*Of Good Works.*

Although good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgments; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and spring out of a true and lively faith, insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree is discerned by its fruit.

XI.—*Of Works of Supererogation.*

Voluntary works, besides, over and above God's commandments, which are called works of supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogancy and impiety. For by them men do

declare that they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for his sake than of bounden duty is required: whereas Christ saith plainly, When ye have done all that is commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants.

XII.—*Of Sin after Justification.*

Not every sin willingly committed after justification is the sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore, the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after justification: after we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and, by the grace of God, rise again and amend our lives. And therefore they are to be condemned who say they can no more sin as long as they live here; or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.

XIII.—*Of the Church.*

The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered, according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

XIV.—*Of Purgatory.*

The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardon, worshipping and adoration as well of images as of relics, and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warrant of Scripture, but repugnant to the word of God.

XV.—*Of Speaking in the Congregation in such a Tongue as the People understand.*

It is a thing plainly repugnant to the word of God, and the custom of the primitive Church, to have public prayer in the Church, or to minister the sacraments, in a tongue not understood by the people.

XVI.—*Of the Sacraments.*

Sacraments, ordained of Christ, are not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession; but rather they are certain signs of

grace, and God's good will toward us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him.

There are two sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel; that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord.

Those five commonly called sacraments, that is to say, confirmation, penance, orders, matrimony, and extreme unction, are not to be counted for sacraments of the Gospel, being such as have partly grown out of the *corrupt* following of the apostles; and partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures, but yet have not the like nature of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, because they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

The sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about; but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same, they have a wholesome effect or operation; but they that receive them unworthily, purchase to themselves condemnation, as St. Paul saith. I Cor. xi. 29.

XVII.—*Of Baptism.*

Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized; but it is also a sign of regeneration, or the new birth. The baptism of young children is to be retained in the Church.

XVIII.—*Of the Lord's Supper.*

The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another, but rather is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death; insomuch that, to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ.

Transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of bread and wine in the Supper of our Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ, but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, over-

throweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. And the means whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper, is faith.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped.

XIX.—*Of both Kinds.*

The cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the lay people; for both the parts of the Lord's supper, by Christ's ordinance and commandment, ought to be administered to all Christians alike.

XX.—*Of the one Oblation of Christ, finished upon the Cross.*

The offering of Christ, once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifice of masses, in the which it is commonly said that the priest doth offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, is a blasphemous fable, and dangerous deceit.

XXI.—*Of the Marriage of Ministers.*

The ministers of Christ are not commanded by God's law either to vow the estate of single life or to abstain from marriage: therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other Christians, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve best to godliness.

XXII.—*Of the Rites and Ceremonies of Churches.*

It is not necessary that rites and ceremonies should in all places be the same, or exactly alike; for they have been always different, and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's word. Whosoever, through his private judgment, willingly and purposely doth openly break the rites and ceremonies of the

Church to which he belongs, which are not repugnant to the word of God, and are ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, that others may fear to do the like, as one that offendeth against the common order of the Church, and woundeth the consciences of weak brethren.

Every particular Church may ordain, change, or abolish rites and ceremonies, so that all things may be done to edification.

XXIII.—*Of the Rulers of the United States of America.*

The President, the Congress, the General Assemblies, the Governors, and the Councils of State, *as the delegates of the people*, are the rulers of the United States of America, according to the division of power made to them by the Constitution of the United States, and by the Constitutions of their respective States. And the said States are a sovereign and independent nation, and ought not to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction.*

XXIV.—*Of Christian Men's Goods.*

The riches and goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as some do falsely boast. Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor, according to his ability.

XXV.—*Of a Christian Man's Oath.*

As we confess that vain and rash swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ and James his apostle; so we judge that the Christian religion doth not prohibit, but that a man may swear when the magistrate requireth, in a cause of faith and charity, so it be done according to the prophet's teaching, in justice, judgment, and truth.

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* "As far as it respects civil affairs, we believe it the duty of Christians, and especially all Christian ministers, to be subject to the supreme authority of the country where they may reside, and to use all laudable means to enjoin obedience to the powers that be; and therefore it is expected that all our preachers and people, who may be under the British or any other government, will behave themselves as peaceable and orderly subjects."—SIMPSON.

STATISTICS OF METHODISM.

GENERAL SUMMARIES.

In the subjoined table the statistical summaries of the Methodist Episcopal Church are those for the year ending July 1, 1878. Those of the Methodist Episcopal Church South are for the year 1877, the latest reported. Those of the British Wesleyan and other branches are the latest reliable summaries which had been received up to September 1, 1878. In several cases the numerical returns of the preachers are for 1877, while those of the lay membership are for 1878. In two or three instances the numbers of local preachers have been estimated by the aid of those best informed with regard to the respective Methodisms. The returns from France and Ireland are in part.

	Itinerant Ministers.	Local Preachers.	Lay Members.
I. Episcopal Methodists in United States:			
Methodist Episcopal	11,308	12,560	1,688,783
Methodist Episcopal South (previous year)	3,439	5,684	765,337
Colored Methodist Episcopal	633	683	112,300
African Methodist Episcopal	1,418	3,168	214,806
African Methodist Episcopal Zion	1,500	2,500	190,900
Evangelical Association	828	540	105,013
United Brethren	1,952	.....	143,841
Union American Methodist Episcopal (Colored)	101	22	2,550
Total Episcopal Methodists in United States	21,184	25,157	3,223,530
II. Non-Episcopal Methodists in United States:			
Methodist Protestant	1,314	925	113,405
American Wesleyan (1876)	250	200	25,000
Free Methodists	224	196	19,232
Primitive Methodists	199	164	3,332
Congregational and other Independent Methodists	23	.....	12,500
Total Non-Episcopal Methodists	2,010	1,485	173,469
III. Methodists in Canada:			
The Methodist Church of Canada (1878)	1,165	3,537	122,605
Methodist Episcopal Church of Canada	267	231	27,285
Primitive Methodist Church	98	262	8,174
Bible Christian Church	81	197	7,793
British Methodist Episcopal Church	41	20	2,000
Total in Canada	1,652	4,247	167,857
IV. Methodism in Great Britain and Missions:			
Wesleyan Methodist Church	1,679	18,711	502,085
Primitive Methodist Church	1,128	15,543	182,782
New Connection Methodist	166	1,156	26,226
Wesley Reform Union	18	599	7,655
United Methodist Free Churches	430	3,501	79,987
Bible Christian Church	284	1,828	30,197
Total in Great Britain and Missions	3,705	41,338	828,932

	Itinerant Ministers.	Local Preachers.	Lay Members.
V. Wesleyan Affiliating Conferences:			
Irish Wesleyan Conference	208	1,040	27,679
French Wesleyan Conference	24	.....	1,905
Australasian Wesleyan	423	1,702	66,505
Total	655	2,742	96,089
Recapitulation:			
Methodists in the United States, including Missions..	23,194	26,642	3,396,999
Methodists in Canada	1,652	4,247	167,857
Methodists in Great Britain and Missions	3,705	41,338	828,932
Methodists of Wesleyan Affiliating Conferences	655	2,742	96,089
Grand total Methodists	29,206	74,969	4,489,877

Methodist Episcopal Church South.

This Church was formally organized at a convention held in Louisville, Kentucky, beginning May 1, 1845. The first General Conference was held in Petersburg, Virginia, May 1, 1846. Bishops Soule and Andrew, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, went with the Methodist Episcopal Church South, and William Capers, D.D., and Robert Paine, D.D., were elected additional bishops. The last General Conference was held in Atlanta, Georgia, May 1, 1878.

Thirteen Conferences severed their connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1845, embracing a total of 1474 travelling preachers, 2550 local preachers, 330,710 white members, 124,811 colored members, and 2978 Indian mission members, making a grand total of 462,428.

The Church reports (in 1878) 7 bishops, 37 Annual Conferences, and 88 literary institutions, including 2 universities, 51 colleges, and 25 seminaries and collegiate institutes.

Statistics for 1877: travelling preachers, 3439; superannuated preachers, 282; local preachers, 5684; lay members, 765,337 (of these 759,216 are white, 1499 colored, and 4622 Indian), total ministers and members, 774,742. Sunday-schools, 7947; Sunday-school teachers, 53,342; scholars, 365,163.

There are 38 Annual Conferences. No official table giving the numerical strength of these by Conferences has been issued since 1875. At that date the numbers in the several Conferences were as follows:

Conferences.	Travelling Preachers.	Superannuated Preachers.	Local Preachers.	White Members.	Total Preachers and Members.	Increase.
Baltimore	178	13	103	25,165	25,548	1,048
Virginia	166	15	189	48,182	48,765	1,618
Western Virginia	59	1	133	12,991	13,208	944
Holston	161	10	294	38,087	38,868	836
North Carolina	146	13	221	53,750	54,551	4,125
South Carolina	149	11	136	40,382	41,109	1,446
North Georgia	170	21	425	53,520	54,204	2,521
South Georgia	109	18	221	29,304	29,652	1,805
Florida	51	8	97	8,705	8,881	486
Alabama	120	10	210	28,975	29,379	1,196
North Alabama	119	8	322	31,680	32,145	318
Louisiana	72	8	75	13,310	13,592	971
Mississippi	105	13	162	20,754	21,034	126
North Mississippi	124	9	204	27,828	28,165	407
Memphis	116	9	276	31,627	32,028	d. 655
Tennessee	192	6	331	40,766	41,297	d. 250
Kentucky	99	8	111	19,306	19,641	d. 1,019
Louisville	119	7	214	29,515	29,885	d. 79
St. Louis	51	5	87	10,421	10,573	807
Southwest Missouri	69	4	112	13,931	14,136	d. 117
Missouri	126	8	141	24,854	25,129	426
Western	20	1	9	2,359	2,389	d. 331
Denver	19	1	1	502	523	d. 143
Indian Mission	18	3	85	313	4,859	d. 335
Arkansas	53	3	162	10,791	11,016	d. 1,154
White River	68	2	108	12,243	12,435	499
Little Rock	77	7	152	14,641	14,877	d. 995
North Texas	83	8	219	18,991	19,301	798
East Texas	50	2	116	11,223	11,391	166
Texas	50	8	59	6,734	6,851	d. 255
Northwest Texas	105	6	233	17,482	17,826	2,156
West Texas	47	5	62	5,018	5,132	489
German Mission	22	...	13	951	986	46
Los Angeles	19	2	17	875	913	87
Pacific	59	3	52	3,728	3,842	365
Columbia	20	1	23	1,033	1,077	58
Illinois	52	2	81	5,792	5,927	48
Montana (organized in 1878)	...	...	...	.....	.....	.....

Contributions and Expenses of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

After examining the official returns for the summaries of the various Conference collections, and carefully estimating for other items, basing such estimates upon exact reports from a large number of churches, and from reports in the local minutes of Annual Conferences, the following list is presented as an approximation of the amounts contributed by the Methodist Episcopal Church for the year 1877. These estimates are under, rather than over, the true amounts :

Conference collections	$918,545
Miscellaneous collections	203,265
Expenses for Sunday-schools	645,340
Expenses for new churches and improvements	981,000
Expenses for local mission work	215,550
Expenses for salaries of ministers	11,269,300
Local church expenses	2,414,850
Total	$16,597,850

Lay Officers of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1878.

CAREFULLY ESTIMATED.

Number of trustees of churches	116,709
Number of stewards of societies	94,243
Number of class-leaders	84,439
Number of Sunday-school superintendents	29,941
Number of Sunday-school teachers and officers other than superintendents	187,892

Growth of the Methodist Episcopal Church by Decades.

Years.	Lay Members.	Gain during Decade.
1777	6,968	.....
1787	25,842	18,874
1797	58,863	33,021
1807	144,590	85,727
1817	224,853	80,263
1827	381,997	157,144
1837	658,574	276,577
1847	636,471	dec. 22,103
1857	820,519	184,048
1867	1,146,081	325,562
1877	1,671,608	525,527

The decrease in the decade closing with 1847 was caused by the separation and independent organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church South. That Church embraced at the time of its organization, in 1845, a total of 462,428 members.

Growth of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Lay Membership as Compared with Population.

Instituting a comparison by taking the decades corresponding with those of the United States Census reports :

Years.	Population.	Increase.	Gain per ct. in Population.	Gain per ct. in M. E. Ch.
1790.....	3,029,827	.....	.....	.....
1800.....	5,305,937	1,376,110	35.02	12.60
1810.....	7,239,814	1,933,887	36.45	168.96
1820.....	9,638,191	2,398,377	33.12	48.87
1830.....	12,866,020	3,227,829	33.49	83.21
1840.....	17,069,453	4,203,433	32.67	68.38
1850.....	23,191,876	6,122,423	35.87	.....
1860.....	31,443,321	8,297,685	35.78	44.20
1870.....	38,558,371	7,115,050	22.62	37.47

The figures showing the progress of the Church for the decade ending with 1850 are omitted, because, as previously noted, during that decade nearly half a million of members fell out of the count by the separation and organization of the Southern Church. It will be seen that the Methodist Episcopal Church has led the population in every decade from the beginning except one. Taking all the decades except the one in which the Southern separation was effected, the average increase in population for each decade was 32.73, while that of the Church lay membership has been 66.24, or *more than double that of the population.*

THE END.

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